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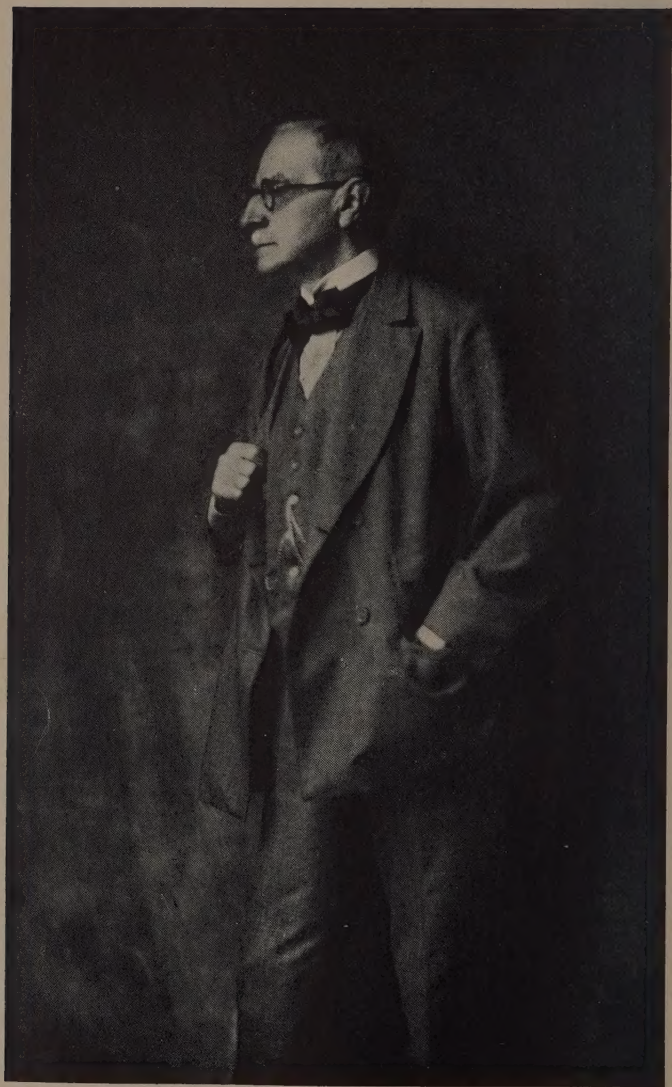
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ST. LOE STRACHEY
HIS LIFE AND HIS PAPER

by
AMY STRACHEY



NEW YORK
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To
SUSAN, CHARLOTTE, AND CHRISTOPHER
To help them to remember

INTRODUCTION

THE success of a biography depends on the vividness of the picture presented of its subject. In the case of the men whose names are known to this generation, the "letters and remains" which are published after their death are mostly concerned with their public work. When planning this book, I looked at the long lines of correspondence files, for which my husband, St. Loe Strachey, had a special cupboard built, and, as I thought of all the interesting matter within their covers, a conversation I had had years ago with a very old friend came back to my memory. "So and so," said my friend, "was saying to me what wonderful work St. Loe is doing in the *Spectator* and in all the 'causes' he is working for so hard."—"How nice," said I; "weren't you pleased he should be appreciated?"—"In a way," answered my friend; "but St. Loe himself is so much more than that."

It is the "so much more than" his public form that I have tried to give in these pages. As an eye-witness of the events of the most important forty years of his life, I know how truly he felt—as he so often said—"Life is much more important than Letters." This, then, is the angle from which I have tried to present him.

And one thing more.

The new generation has altered the old values of morality—youth has revolted against the shams and cruelties of permanent marriage, and, exclaiming against all "possessive" ideas, would loosen the bond of marriage till it holds only as long as both partners are fully satisfied.

I think that we of the older generation cannot judge them. They have new standards and ideals, and, as long as they act up to these, we must be content neither to understand nor to censure. But we may be allowed to remind them that the older morality had something of value to contribute to the world. Terminable marriage is and must be "subject to the law of change," and how, then, can married friendship and companionship develop in tranquil security? The companionship of marriage and the ties of the family were all important to St. Loe, and no picture of him which failed to show this side could be anything but flat and lifeless. I have, therefore, written of our life together from the moment of our first meeting in a London ball-room to the eve of our separation, forty-one years later. I leave it to the younger generation to judge whether a tie so close as that which held us could develop under a more elastic marriage law.

Following the model set in *The Adventure of Living*, I have, except where absolutely essential, neither written of living people nor published their letters. For the permission I have received to publish the letters and quotations from newspapers included in these chapters I tender most grateful thanks. Everyone has been more than kind, and I must especially thank Lord Cromer and Mrs. Roosevelt for the trouble they took with the rather voluminous correspondence which I laid before them. Finally and especially do I thank C. K. E., who has done all the hard work, and without whose sympathy and encouragement the writing of this book would more than once have been abandoned.

AMY STRACHEY.

HARROWHILL COPSE,
NEWLANDS CORNER.
August, 1930.

CONTENTS

PART I

IN THE DAYS OF VICTORIA

<i>Chapter</i>	I. Courtship, 1886-7	<i>page</i> 13
	II. The Experiment of Marriage	23
	III. Sutton Court and the Stracheys	31
	IV. Adjustments	37
	V. Newlands Corner	49
	VI. The World Awheel	61
	VII. Travel	74
	VIII. The Talent of Success	85
	IX. The Late Nineties	94
	X. The Boer War	102
	XI. The Queen's Passing	115

PART II

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SOWS ITS WILD OATS

<i>Chapter</i>	I. Four Words from Mr. Balfour	<i>page</i> 125
	II. America	135
	III. The <i>Spectator</i>	149
	IV. Two Crises in the Far East	165

<i>Chapter V. The County Gentleman</i>	<i>page</i> 183
VI. " St. Loe for Merry England ! "	190
VII. The Shadow of Death	203
VIII. The Shifted Focus	206
IX. 14, Queen Anne's Gate, 1908-14	211
X. Single Chamber Government	224
XI. " Dragon's Teeth " —1900 to 1914	235
XII. 1914—Before the War	245

PART III

THE WAR AND AFTER

<i>Chapter I. The Newlands Corner Hospital,</i> 1914-19	<i>page</i> 261
II. St. Loe in War Time : As Citizen	282
III. St. Loe in War Time : As Editor	296
IV. Across St. George's Channel	315
V. The <i>Spectator</i> and America during the War	325
VI. Gains and Losses	343
VII. Ethics and Ideals	350
VIII. Last Years	358
IX. The End of the Story	378

PART I
IN THE DAYS OF VICTORIA

CHAPTER I

COURTSHIP, 1886-7

“Th’ high-titled cares of adult strife,
Which we our duties call,
Trades, arts, and politics of life,
Say, have they, after all,
One other object, end, or use
Than that, for girl and boy,
The punctual earth may still produce
This golden flower of joy?”

—ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

There are moments which live immortally in the memory, when thousands of others—equal in duration by the notation of time—are buried deep in the dust of years. Such a moment was our first meeting. It was in the spring of 1886 at a small dance at a house on Campden Hill. I had come alone after a dinner-party at my parents’ house, and, as I had been out a good deal that week, my mother warned me she would send the carriage early for me and I was not to keep it waiting. The hour struck, the carriage was duly announced, when, as I was making my way over the empty, shining floor, my hostess’s daughter came to me and said, “May I introduce Mr. St. Loe Strachey—Miss Amy Simpson?” Well, it was no use; I had to go without the dance he asked for, but an odd sense of frustration filled my mind as I went home in the stuffy little brougham, past the church in which, the following year, we were to be married.

The next meeting was better, it was a few weeks later

at another dance—for our courtship was conducted entirely on these sort of occasions—and there this strange, eager young man with his wonderful vibrating voice and piercing eyes first began to pour out such riches of mind and temperament that I sat spellbound—quite regardless of other partners.

The third meeting was so disappointing and so drolly characteristic of a certain aspect of St. Loe that it must be chronicled. At another dance I caught sight of his face on the stairs and mentally reserved some dances for his benefit. It was wasted pains. He disappeared, and it was not till some time after that I learnt the cause. By some accident his coat had split all down the back, and he was obliged to sidle down the stairs with his back to the wall and hasten to the shelter of his greatcoat—and flight. In the early summer, St. Loe met my mother at a dinner-party, made a most favourable impression on her, and was invited to call on one of the Sunday afternoons in which the Victorian hostess delighted, and which week-ends and motor-cars have killed. The call was a great success, and my mother—a most competent judge of “good talk”—professed herself delighted with St. Loe’s brilliance of conversation. Those were the opening days of the great Home Rule split, and St. Loe, turning his back on the family Gladstonian tradition, followed the then Lord Hartington into the ranks of the new Liberal Unionist Party. In 1886 the London season was a very real entity, and great was my lamentation when the dissolution in the middle of June scattered hostesses and guests alike into the whirlpool of the General Election. Amongst others, St. Loe disappeared from my world, and, to tell the truth, I turned my attention to other pressing affairs of a sentimental nature. Through a summer passed on Albury

Heath—that enchanting common at the foot of the Downs, on the summit of which the best part of my life was to be spent—I took an academic interest in the tangled political situation produced by the country's verdict on Home Rule. Back in London in the autumn, I went on with the lectures at the Kensington rooms of King's College for Women, by means of which I rather sketchily tried to continue my education. These and small dances and dinners in the quiet social world in which my people moved—a world in which many distinguished literary and legal figures were to be met—had constituted the background of my life from eighteen to twenty. Then one night in the late autumn of '86 there came—as there must come in the quietest circles—a clash of engagements. I had promised to go to a small dance, when an invitation arrived from Mrs. Earle, later to be famous for her *Pot Pourri from a Surrey Garden*, to come to a late evening party to meet Miss Mary Anderson, then at the height of her fame. With no premonition that this evening would change the course of my life, I decided to leave the dance early, and, chaperoned by my youngest brother, then on leave from India, proceeded to Bryanston Square. There on the sofa sat Mary Anderson, the freshness of her beauty seen to much greater advantage in a drawing-room than across the footlights. I gazed at her as much as I dared, but when good manners made me avert my eyes, I was conscious of the opening of the door and of Mrs. Earle's very kind and cordial reception of St. Loe. To this day I remember the profound and instant conviction which assailed me that, in forgetting his existence for five months, I had forgotten a fact of supreme importance. As at the moment of death some people remember the whole of their past life, so I at that moment, in the incongruous

setting of a London party, had a premonition of the whole of my future and of the love and companionship which were to be mine. A corner of the back drawing-room absorbed us for the rest of the evening, and, whether St. Loe saw Mary Anderson or not, I was given no opportunity for a second glimpse of her.

Thereafter our courtship was as uninterrupted as was possible, considering that it was conducted entirely at London parties. Even before the coming of the "week-end," social London emptied itself four times a year—at the three feasts of the Church, and at the feast of St. Lubbock on the first Monday in August. Christmas 1886 accordingly stopped the meetings which I, at any rate, was beginning to find gave a special zest to the parties at which they happened. Then came the great event of my mother's and my social year—the Cornwall Gardens theatricals. These had taken place—with one long interval—annually since I, at the ripe age of three, had represented the good fairy in *Cinderella*, and, judging by the crowded state of the front drawing-room auditorium—three performances were always necessary—were decidedly successful. St. Loe duly came to one of the evening performances—and it was many months before he told me how much he had disliked it. After this and through the winter and early spring the carefully arranged "sitting out" places at the dances which we frequented heard many a discussion on life and literature, and I made my first acquaintance with the quatrains of FitzGerald's *Omar Khayyám* and with the lyrics of the Elizabethans, other than Shakespeare.

If it be objected that such a courtship, conducted entirely on occasions which called for "company manners," is a most risky preparation for the companionship

of marriage, I shall answer that a week of marriage teaches two people to regard each other's "ways" and character from quite a different angle, and that therefore a marriage founded on falling in love is just as likely to be successful as one founded on solid and long continued friendship. Besides, what a pity it would be to miss the delightful surprises which are possible if a young couple do not know each other too well. Similarity in tastes comes out slowly. I still remember the pleasure it gave me to find that St. Loe was as devoted a disciple of Miss Austen as I. Of the deeper sympathies I do not write. True comrades will guess these through my silence, and no one else would understand.

But even these interrupted meetings were themselves to be interrupted by Easter. My people had taken a house at Bournemouth for a month, and a casual verbal invitation was given to St. Loe to run down for a Sunday. But to come in uncertainty by no means suited his temperament. One morning, getting down early to breakfast, I found a letter from him asking for an assurance that, if he came, it would be of some use. I took it out into the pine-woods and tried to pretend to myself—the Victorian era had not even had time to become *fin de siècle*—that it was too soon. I did not want to be hurried. I did not know him well enough. But all the time I heard "harps in the air," and quite literally my feet were set to the music of a great and unseen orchestra. Needless to say, I told him to come.

After the one day of pure unthinking romance on which he came—romance warmed and heightened by my dear mother's love and sympathy—the hubbub of worldly affairs broke over us.

My father was still in London, and complained wistfully, when he got to Bournemouth, that he did not even

know St. Loe by sight. But, in spite of his rather austere exterior, he had a traitor within in the shape of an incurably romantic heart, and was quickly satisfied as to finances, as far as an ultimate marriage was concerned, by finding that St. Loe had excellent prospects on the *Spectator*. Indeed, Mr. Meredith Townsend, most brilliant of journalists, then, jointly with Mr. R. H. Hutton, Editor and Proprietor of the *Spectator*, advised St. Loe not to surrender his prospects "unless somebody offers you a Colonial Governorship." On the more important question of character, the chorus of appreciation which came from St. Loe's friends made him feel that here was no ground for doubt. Mr. Bernard Mallet, as he then was, whose friendship never varied from their Oxford days, made a special journey to Bournemouth to bring home to my parents what a lucky girl I was to have St. Loe fall in love with me. Oddly enough, Bernard Mallet himself was a very old friend, but he had never introduced this paragon, with whom he had set up house in South Molton Street, to my people in Cornwall Gardens. Charming letters were received from Sir Edward Strachey, and those first days flew by in a whirl of good wishes and happy anticipations. St. Loe was very busy. The Liberal Unionist controversy was raging, and he had just been entrusted with the editorship of the Party organ, which bore the rather unattractive name of the *Liberal Unionist*. The next time I saw him after the Bournemouth days was on the morrow of a very stormy meeting in the Kensington Town Hall, where the platform had been invaded by a crowd of roughs, who had left extremely visible marks on St. Loe, whose head and arm were tied up as a result of his prowess.

Soon after this, we went down together for my first visit to Sutton Court. That, again, is an unforgettable

moment. With great extravagance, we hired a hansom and drove straight out from Bristol, and the entry on a fresh, sunny May day, under the archway of the old fortified wall, through the front-door guarded by the Edward III turret, made an ineffaceable impression upon my romantic mind. Still more ineffaceable was the first sight of St. Loe's father. He was very small, very frail, leaning on a stick, with a little pointed white Van Dyck beard, but with the most marvellous "regard" that I have ever seen. I have met two saints in my life, and he was one of them. Through his eyes one seemed to see shining his selfless soul, which at that moment was filled with eager love to welcome a new daughter. Not all the nervousness which, I confess, was consuming me was proof against this welcome, and as I passed with him into the long Great Parlour, with the sun shining through the great window at the end, I felt almost reassured.

St. Loe has described his father with such tender insight in his autobiography that I cannot hope to contribute anything to the picture. But as I write I have an echo in my ears of his voice speaking with little gasps of eagerness, as if the tongue could not keep pace with the lightning quickness of the thought. Together with the transparency and simplicity of character which made Sir Edward Strachey so unique a figure in a complicated world, he possessed to a high degree the saving grace of humour. Indeed, in thinking of the three figures to whom St. Loe and I stood together in filial relations—his father and my mother and father—I am deeply grateful for the fact that they and we all laughed at the same jokes. A sense of humour is indeed a saving grace, and serves, perhaps, better than any other link to bridge the gap between two generations.

St. Loe's mother, to my everlasting regret, had died before my marriage. The memories which remained among those she left behind her show clearly how gracious an influence had been withdrawn from them. She lived and lives in the hearts of those who loved her.

My first days at Sutton passed quickly by, and while we were there, St. Loe received a letter from my father and mother giving permission for what he had been insistently clamouring for—an immediate marriage. He never liked transitional states—"do or not do" was his motto—and my mother used to heave heavy sighs and say how trying was the perpetual presence of a domestic Romeo and Juliet. An ecstatic letter from St. Loe to her gives the exact date, so that even he could not complain that an engagement begun in April and ended in July was a long one.

We came back to London and the bustle of wedding preparations. My people were anything but Victorian in outlook, but the restrictions on engaged couples would look curious to the young people of to-day, and may be illustrated by a letter of St. Loe's to my mother asking her whether he may call for me at the house of my godmother (Miss Henrietta Hampden, the daughter of Bishop Hampden), 107, Eaton Place, "on Friday at a quarter to four to fetch her and take her to tea in Harry's studio. May she do this? I need hardly say that on such a subject your opinion is mine, and if you dislike the idea, I will give up the notion altogether. Unless I hear from you, may I conclude that you have no objection?"

The June of that summer saw Queen Victoria's first Jubilee (June 21st), and we watched it together from an office in Whitehall. After this, life became a whirlwind of presents, parties, and trousseau.

Like most women, I have a vivid recollection of my

wedding—vivid and highly coloured, but in miniature. I see the figures before me—life-like, and in colour, but tiny, as though I were looking at a cinema film through the wrong end of a telescope. I see first the scene the evening before in the empty drawing-room at Cornwall Gardens—cleared for the wedding party next day—and with a large table set down in the middle. Round it sit the lawyers and my parents, and on it are spread parchments and pen and ink, while a flickering candle—pale in the light of the July evening—stands waiting to melt the red sealing-wax by which the parchment is to be decorated. I hear an interminable, dull voice reading the terms of the marriage settlement and of the wills which, by my father's wish, we were to sign as soon as our signatures would be binding. I see the cloudless sky which greeted my waking next morning with its promise of a blazing day. I see—I can almost smell—the red roses which seem to have been everywhere heaping the vases, red for the bridesmaids and white for me. I see my father helping me with quiet efficiency into the carriage—and I remember wondering why people stared, when, forgetful of my costume, I looked out of the window at something which caught my eye in Kensington High Street. I see, *not* the group of pretty bridesmaids who must have been waiting in the porch, but the long procession two by two up the aisle of the Gothic church which had replaced old Kensington church—and St. Loe waiting at the top in a large and beautiful blue tie which we had chosen with great care together, and which proved eminently becoming. I cannot, unfortunately, see any of the wedding guests, though it was always our pride to think that the register had been signed by Mr. Russell Lowell, the American Minister, and Mr. Lecky, the historian—but I do see

the two beautiful children, St. Loe's nephew and niece, who held up my long train.

Back at Cornwall Gardens, I see the hurried scene in an upstairs sitting-room, where the wills which had bored us the night before were signed and witnessed—and then our journey in the hottest of trains to Henley and the peace and coolness of the river. And so the bright summer day sank to its sunset and our long companionship began.

CHAPTER II

THE EXPERIMENT OF MARRIAGE

Our honeymoon was of the briefest. Mr. Townsend was about to go on his holiday, and St. Loe had been invited in the previous November to take the place of each editor in turn during his annual absence. We were married on Wednesday, July 13th, 1887, and on the following Tuesday, the 19th, St. Loe was due at the *Spectator* office to help Mr. Hutton for seven weeks to edit the paper. After the fourteen weeks were over we had a delightful prospect before us, for we had not only received a gift of fifty pounds from St. Loe's Aunt Charlotte, but also an invitation from St. Loe's great friend, Horatio Brown, who later held an official position under the Record Office for research in the Archives of the City, to stay with him and his mother at the Cà Toresella in Venice. So we felt that our wedding journey was only postponed.

Meanwhile there was a great deal of work to be done. Besides putting in four days a week at the *Spectator* office, St. Loe was editing the *Liberal Unionist*, which, after a summer of weekly appearances, had subsided into a monthly. Every month then and through the winter I used to go down with him to Messrs. Cassell's in La Belle Sauvage Yard to help as much as I could with the details of the "make-up" of the paper. Well do I remember Mr. Bull, the head printer—a delightful man, in whose little office we sat working to the accompaniment of the thumps of the presses beneath. Soon Mr. Bull and St. Loe between them

discovered that I was a humble follower of Mrs. Grudden, that useful member of the staff of Mr. Crummles, with whose aid Nicholas Nickleby once set to work on the composition of the poster announcing his rapidly written play. Mrs. Grudden had "quite a genius for making out" bills, "being a great hand at throwing in the notes of admiration, and knowing from long experience exactly where the largest capitals ought to go." I had no experience, but was acknowledged to have a pretty taste in lettering. We had great fun over what Mr. Bull persisted in calling the "côntents bill," with the accent well on the first syllable.

Everybody knew, of course, that the *Liberal Unionist*, being a technical paper, could not possibly be self-supporting and would, therefore, probably not survive long. No severely political, technical paper can get advertisements, and even the lay public nowadays understands that advertisements are the financial life-blood of the Press. However, St. Loe's salary was a most useful asset, and during the weeks of the editorial holidays we were quite well off; but, having no capital to fall back upon, it would have been impossible for us to set up for ourselves, and my people most kindly gave us a home at 14, Cornwall Gardens, South Kensington.

Very early in that long series of visits to La Belle Sauvage Yard we came across Mr. Oscar Wilde, who was at the moment editing for Messrs. Cassell a magazine whose name I have forgotten. He commissioned me to write an article on the Child Players of the Elizabethan Age, and my visits to Messrs. Cassell's were diversified by long séances at the London Library, a life membership of which had been St. Loe's most delightful wedding present, again from Aunt Charlotte.

But, though the *Liberal Unionist* was a technical journal,

it was of a decidedly lively nature. The first number had appeared on March 30th, 1887, and had contained articles by Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain. The Hartington article was a foreword, of which I still have the autograph MS., with a scribbled note in St. Loe's writing, "Please send me back MS." I will not quote it, as there is nothing so dull as dead politics. The L.U. headquarters had given general directions to St. Loe to provide paragraphs which would contain material for speakers, and he himself later added a column entitled "Humours of the Fray." Jokes as a rule keep no better than politics, but Irish humour is very often dateless. No one but an Irishman could have given this answer to the question "Well, Patsy, did ye pay your rint?" "I did not, and divil a penny will I pay of it until they let O'Blatherum out of gaol, and *God keep him there!*"

Mr. Townsend's seven weeks and Mr. Hutton's six weeks, with the intermediate week in which they were together, were over by the end of October, and off we went abroad, both of us with abominable colds. I had never been farther than Paris, so Italy was new ground to me, and, though the weather was not kind, we had a more than delightful time both in Venice and in Florence, to which we went afterwards. Although, of course, we did not fail, as Rosalind says, "to swim in a gondola," the cold in Venice was so great that we spent more of our time in the churches and galleries than in the usual Venetian pleasures. Not till many years later were we in Venice in hot weather, nor till then did we see and hear those delightful little evening *festas*, in which, on a big punt-like raft illuminated by Chinese lanterns, itinerant musicians perform "*Sole mio*," while the gondolas, emulously crowded together, thrust their sharp noses forward to get

good sight and hearing. An indoor entertainment to which an American lady, a friend of Robert Browning's, took us and a large party in 1887 was a show of the marionettes in a theatre of the Popolo. St. Loe gives an amusing account, in a letter to my mother, of how this lady had had the box cleaned and disinfected, and then scented with lavender water. The marionettes were very entertaining ; but more striking than anything was the voice which at the fall of the curtain cried "*Plaudite*" from behind the scenes—an exclamation which St. Loe said had come directly down from Roman times.

In Florence we took a cheap room in the Washington Hotel on the Lungarno, and succeeded in feeding ourselves in Italian restaurants for ten lire a day—a feat which I think would be impossible now. How well I remember the anxious consultations over the bill of fare at Gigli e Letta's Restaurant, and the question as to the comparative degree of nourishment to be obtained in the various dishes for two lire. We were quite unacquainted in those days with either calories or vitamins, so our experiments were purely empirical.

That winter, when we got back to 14, Cornwall Gardens, we had socially a most delightful time, for at what St. Loe later called "the kindly custom of wedding dinners" the most recent bride was always taken down to dinner by the host, regardless of the table of precedence. Never did I have such pleasant dinners. Not only was the host generally an able man himself, but near him were put the most notable people of the party. I remember sitting next to Lord Halsbury, who knew my father and talked law to me. I was much struck by his concurring in my father's opinion on the vexed question of counsel defending prisoners whom they suspected to be guilty.

“What the jury have to be convinced of,” my father always said, “is not whether the prisoner is guilty or not. It is whether there is sufficient legal evidence to prove him guilty.” When, later on, what would then have been the incredible happened, and I became a Justice of the Peace myself, this phrase of my father’s saved me from a good many rude shocks.

But this round of pleasant parties and social life, with St. Loe having just enough work to interest, but not tire him, did not last beyond the spring. By then I know that a baby was coming to us in the autumn, and I am ashamed to say the knowledge afforded me no sort of pleasure. Mr. Bernard Shaw in those days had not written *Man and Superman*, but when in after years I came to see it, Anne’s phrase, “Is there a father’s heart, too?” struck me with its absolute verity. St. Loe was delighted. I was not. Not only did I very much dislike being ill, but I did not want a baby there at all. It seemed to me it would be a great interruption and very inconvenient. However, everybody said that in October it would undoubtedly be born, and we thought that the best thing would be to leave London for a good many weeks of what might prove a hot summer. The autumn before, just after our marriage, my people had taken a house on Fairmile Common, Cobham, and there we had contracted the habit of hiring small pony traps and going out with a sandwich lunch and tea, wandering over the commons of Surrey. By the end of May we thought that it would be a good thing to go away from London, and, in order that St. Loe might conveniently come up and down, we took a lodging in the High Street of Guildford in a charming old Georgian house, called Highgate House, next to the Grammar School—it is still unaltered except for an optical display in the dining-room

window. As far as I remember, St. Loe only had to go to London about three times a week, and when he could stay with me, we were apt to hire a pony and trap in fine weather and go off on the various commons by which Guildford is surrounded.

One afternoon we drove straight up Castle Hill and along the green road, the old Tin Way or Down Road towards Dorking. I knew Newlands Corner well from my stay at Albury nearly two years before, and as soon as we came to the sign-post we drew up and unpacked our picnic basket, and there on a spirit-lamp I mixed and cooked an omelette in perfect solitude. No one went over the Downs in those days except on business. There were no buses, or policemen, or motor-cars. There was only the great view to the south. After lunch we packed up our basket and started trotting down the Merrow road. We had not gone far when a sunk road on the left attracted our attention. It looked extremely bumpy, which was not particularly good for me ; but, notwithstanding this, down we went, and in a moment found ourselves in a wide green valley bordered on each side with great trees of hawthorn in full bloom, looking like bridal bouquets. A little way to the right was a green lawn surrounded by enormous yew-trees, and, passing this, the valley wound on and on towards Guildford.

*On Merrow Down the cuckoos cry,
The silence and the sun remain,*

as Kipling sang years after, when we took him down what we then and there christened "The Happy Valley." Since that day we have walked a hundred times a year down the valley and yearly seen the hawthorn change to elder blossom, the elder followed by waterfalls of honeysuckle, and, as the last grand pageant of the year, the red

hawthorn berries and the golden leaves mingled with the dark green of the yew-trees. I have not to this day made up my mind whether it is more beautiful to see "The Happy Valley" when walking down it or from the race-course at the top looking across it. This same race-course is just a green track running westward, and on this green track St. Loe always maintained that Eclipse had been trained.

But in the summer of 1888 we were not always absorbed in Nature. On one occasion at least Nature was mixed with a most charming and arcadian art. In the beginning of July we saw an advertisement that the company of Ben Greet would perform the fairy scenes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the old quarry at Guildford. A letter from St. Loe to his father tells how

"the place was a very large old chalk-pit with chestnut-trees of about 40 years' growth growing on soft green turf quite naturally and yet very well arranged for scenic effect. The stage, as it were, was under some trees and against the old wall of the quarry, which towered up above some forty feet and was wreathed with ivy and other creepers. The walls of the quarry, however, were not precipitous but had paths cut along them and running up and down. Along and up and down these paths the actors came and went. The fairies were done by children and looked very pretty. It was between 8.30 and 10.30, but the dark was only half dark and limelight was turned on the actors. I wish you could have seen Bottom come on with his ass's head. Altogether it was quite the most beautiful piece of stage effect I ever saw."

It is easy to imagine the effect on the minds of two romantic young people of this delightful performance.

To save me travelling, my parents had most kindly that year taken for their summer house a large school at Wimbledon, which made it quite easy for St. Loe to go up and down in the busy fourteen weeks in which, as usual, he helped the editors of the *Spectator*, and thence early in September we came to settle down quietly in Cornwall Gardens for a month before the baby should be born. But the baby thought otherwise, and on September 8th manifested his intention of making an immediate appearance, which he carried out on the following morning at two o'clock. I wish I could write of transports of maternal delight filling my heart, but they did nothing of the kind. There is no doubt that when Tom was born, he was extraordinarily plain. A Strachey nose is no adornment to a baby. I can afford to say so, for he made ample amends afterwards, and his memory is the dearest, except one, that my heart can hold. He must, indeed, have been born with that wisdom which he showed so often in his short life, for very soon he taught me what a lovely side of life I was in danger of missing. When I was well enough to go away—and when I think of the ways of my monthly nurse I wonder that I ever was—we went, Nurse, Baby, and all, to my husband's old home, Sutton Court. There we slept in one of the spare rooms, while Nurse and Baby were relegated to the old nurseries down a long passage. One sunny morning we went as usual before breakfast to see that they were all right. Baby was lying alone on his back on the top of the nurse's bed, and as we bent over him his little face suddenly broke into an exquisite smile. “*Incipe, parve puer,*” said St. Loe, “*risu cognoscere matrem,*”¹ and so I got my first lesson in mothercraft.

¹ “Begin, little boy, with a laugh to recognise your mother.”

CHAPTER III

SUTTON COURT AND THE STRACHEYS

There is no doubt that the little fortified manor of Sutton Court was the idol of the Strachey family. Indeed, with its smiling lawns and great avenues of elms and lime-trees, the house forms a perfect background for the dreams of a student. Students they were, St. Loe's ancestors, but yet men of action too. I was early shown the portrait of a forbidding-looking old lady, familiarly called the Widow Baber, by whose marriage with William Strachey the house was brought into the family. William Strachey was the first Secretary to the Colony of Virginia in 1609, and on this was based St. Loe's claim to be "Founders' kin" of the United States of America, a claim of which he was prouder than of any other distinction which came to him. St. Loe always liked to think that the wreck of the ship, the *Sea Venture*, off the "vexed Bermiothes" was described to Shakespeare at the "Mermaid" by William Strachey and formed the basis for the first act of *The Tempest*. His MSS. were sold at Christie's for a very large sum in the spring of 1928.

It was Building Bess of Hardwicke, who lived at Sutton Court with one of her numerous husbands, who had built on to the Edward III turret an Elizabethan manor with a hall, a chapel, and a Great Parlour. In the last delightful resort John Locke the philosopher wrote that he looked

forward to fruitful conversation with his friend John Strachey, a Fellow of the Royal Society, known to the family as the Antiquarian. As, apparently, his contribution to science was to explain the stratification of rocks, the name never seemed to me very appropriate. Delightful conversation was, however, the characteristic of the Great Parlour. The long room, with its window giving on to the lawn at the end, was lined with books, and a charming eighteenth-century "conversation piece," of Archdeacon Strachey, his wife and family, by Sir William Beechey, hung as the sole picture over the mantelpiece. This room was less spoilt than any other part of the house by the devastations of the architect Wyatt, who had been employed by my father-in-law, when he succeeded to his eccentric uncle, the second Sir Henry Strachey. It was a room in which I saw in imagination many pleasant pictures of St. Loe as a boy reaching down one after another of the great volumes of literature which he loved. This picture was reflected later, in the modern Great Parlour at Newlands Corner, the lineal descendant of the Great Parlour of Building Bess, where our children in turn were to sit absorbed in the books partly accumulated by their father and partly left to me through my maternal grandfather, Nassau Senior.

The talk at Sutton Court was always stimulating. After dinner any subject under the sun might be brought forward by the three brothers or their father. The inner workings of the Liberal Party might be described by Edward (now Lord Strachie), or we might have an evening devoted to literature originated by St. Loe, or to art expounded by Harry. In all discussions Sir Edward joined with keen interest and attention, while the females of the family sat by, longing very often to contribute their quota,

but quite unable to find a pause in which their lower voices could produce any effect on the audience. Years after I married, my sister-in-law, Constance (now Lady Strachie), on hearing an anecdote from my mother of my extreme talkativeness in youth, exclaimed in surprise that she thought me a very silent person. It was no wonder. There was no possibility of being anything else when four male Stracheys were discussing life and letters. The room which St. Loe and I were always given was the old chapel, now converted into a charming bed-room, with a dressing-room irreverently called "the vestry." The staircase passed near the door of this room, and when I went up to bed before the men of the party, I always told St. Loe their slow progress up the stairs sounded as if the family rookery was holding a confabulation. That same staircase was a source of infinite pain to me. Wyatt had made it modern in every detail, and its mid-Victorianism was a sad come-down after the romance of the fortified wall and the tower, with its winding turret staircase. The Great Hall, unfortunately, was spoilt by the same architect by being ceiled and a second floor of nurseries being formed above it. Sir Edward always said that he knew this was a pity, but that he could not afford to have a house to look at as well as a house to live in. He told us stories of the ruined minstrels' gallery that had been there in his uncle's time, and of the suit of armour which had hung on the wall, the breastplate of which had been finally used by the estate mason as a receptacle for mixing mortar. Still, in spite of the ceiling, the Great Hall, with its bay window, its shining golden floor, its pictures and its panelling, is a very delightful place, and the portraits give that sense of the continuity of the family which makes each individual feel himself only one item in a corporate life. The Stracheys

are most strongly the children of their fathers, not of their mothers. "It does not matter whom they marry," said one of St. Loe's aunts to me when I was quite young; "the type continues and has been the same for three hundred years." Happy memories of those and of later days hang for me round the Great Hall and the stone terrace to the south of the house. I see a picture of the baby of the last chapter, grown into little Tommy, running after his cousin Teddy and crying, "Taddy, Taddy." Later I see a short procession of our daughter Amabel, with her Titian red curls, leading her grandfather, then nearly blind, through the hall and garden, followed by his favourite cat. This she considered her special task when she was at Sutton. I see too, St. Loe's fair-haired young sister Frances, sitting by the fire in the Great Parlour reading to her father. Such are the memories and pictures of the home to which St. Loe returned so often during his father's lifetime.

Yet, with all this, there was a blank, a gap in the household. St. Loe's mother, the centre of the family group, had died four years before our marriage. Her influence had not died with her. St. Loe has often told me how she insisted, when they were boys, on their having good manners. She taught them to get up when a woman came into the room, to open the door, and all the little old-fashioned courtesies which modern man has dropped—perhaps properly, because woman cannot fight him on equal ground and yet be treated to chivalrous privileges. Marabella Symonds was only nineteen when she married Sir Edward in November, 1857. Her sister Charlotte, widow of Thomas Hill Green, the well-known philosopher, gave me before her death the whole story of this curious marriage between a young girl and a lame, middle-aged widower, and told me I might include it in these pages.

Sir Edward was a friend of Dr. John Addington Symonds the elder—a notable figure of Victorian times, and the father of the better known man of letters, John Addington Symonds. Dr. Symonds had a great reputation as a physician, and patients came from far away to consult him at Oxford. Mentally he was a man of great distinction, with a love of poetry which endeared him to his friend, Sir Edward Strachey, who with his first wife used to come on frequent visits to Clifton Hill House. As the friend of Dr. Symonds, his visits, of course, did not cease with the death of his wife. Young Charlotte in those days considered him a delightful old gentleman, who brought her large boxes of chocolates in the shape of insects. To the great astonishment of the whole family, Sir Edward presently courted and proposed to Marabella, who was hardly nineteen. Dr. Symonds was much taken aback, but Marabella was very much in love with her elderly suitor. She had a taste for old gentlemen, for Aunt Charlotte related that on a certain visit to Cambridge she came back cherishing a photograph and autograph of one of the dons, which was found among her papers after her marriage, labelled “This is to be buried with me.” Her marriage with Sir Edward Strachey took place in the parish church at Clifton, and Dr. Symonds was so much overcome with emotion that he spent the whole afternoon weeping in the drawing-room of Clifton Hill House, to Aunt Charlotte’s great perturbation. The marriage was an unqualified success, and, though Lady Strachey’s health generally compelled her to winter in the South of France, yet the old manor house in Somerset was the axle round which the wheel of the family life revolved. As for St. Loe, the garden, the stream, the gulley, the views of the Mendip hills made an ineffaceable mark on his mind, and he could

never have been satisfied, as I, a hardened Cockney, should have been, with living all the year round in London. But a working journalist must live in London, especially if he is married and knows that he has only his own exertions to depend on to support his family. Back to London, therefore, we went, temporarily to the home which, as I have said before, my people had so kindly offered us.

CHAPTER IV

ADJUSTMENTS

A companionship such as ours became does not and cannot grow spontaneously and unconsciously. The foundation must be something far deeper and more lasting than physical passion, though without physical passion that foundation would probably never be laid at all. Such a companionship is a plant of tender growth and cannot be lightly harvested. I should, perhaps, have thought that St. Loe sacrificed too much to the life of his home, were it not that without his home life to satisfy and soothe him, his physique could never have stood the demands of his active, eager mind. I was his mental anodyne, and it was my special task to look after his physical well-being. Of course, it was a long time before I realised this. At first I saw only the most marvellous lover and comrade in the world—a comrade, too, of whose conversation it was impossible to tire, so varied were the riches of his mind and so vivid was the language in which he expressed himself. But—and it was a big but—I gradually found that the weak joint in his harness was his physique. He had already had one desperate illness, his family history was not very good, and there was some danger of all this brilliant promise being brought to nothing by ill health. It took me some eight or ten years to realise that no work that I myself could ever hope to accomplish would be so valuable to the world as that of keeping St. Loe, to the best of my power,

mentally refreshed and physically fit. It was only when the War destroyed all values that I definitely put other work before this special task. But in the light-hearted beginnings, we were far from taking even so serious a subject solemnly. As may be imagined, St. Loe was a great acquisition at 14, Cornwall Gardens, both in the family circle and from a social point of view. In spite—perhaps because—of their difference in temperament, he and my father were the best of companions, and our life with my parents was both happy and harmonious. My mother, being the daughter of Nassau Senior, who had been so prominent a figure in Victorian society, had a large circle of interesting friends, in whom St. Loe delighted. There was a curious link between our families, for Dr. Symonds and Nassau Senior had been friends. Indeed, Aunt Charlotte (the Mrs. Green mentioned in the last chapter) remembered Nassau Senior coming to stay at her father's and her surprise, as a young girl, at hearing him asked whether he had brought his Journals. My mother also remembered St. Loe's grandfather coming to her father's house in Kensington and bringing his daughter with him. That daughter must have been St. Loe's mother, for both the remaining sisters were alive when I married, and on my questioning them they each said that they would have remembered such a visit had it taken place. The younger generation will have forgotten that Nassau Senior was one of the leading spirits of the Royal Commission for the Amendment of the Poor Law in 1830 and was the first Professor of Political Economy at Oxford. He was the Boswell of his day, and a whole shelf of volumes testifies to his marvellous power of recollecting and setting down long conversations. My grandmother was a semi-invalid, and my mother, as Minnie Senior, was my grandfather's close companion

through the forties and fifties, going to all the parties and seeing all the notables of those interesting days. A lovely full-length portrait of her by Watts is the sole picture in the room in which I am writing, and shows the grace and beauty which remained with her as quite an old woman. Never was a person more addicted to Society than she was. Married to a shy barrister, she created around herself in a very ordinary drawing-room in South Kensington a delightful "circle"—as she always called it—and a long procession of eminent figures whom I saw there in my youth passes before my eyes. Walter Bagehot, Matthew Arnold, Dean Stanley (to whom I once personally administered seven cups of tea!), Francis Jeune (afterwards Lord St. Helier), Sidney Colvin, A. W. Kinglake, Herman Merivale, William Brookfield, George Stovin Venables—these were a few of the frequenters of our house. They came alone on Sunday afternoons when women visitors were scarce, besides coming with their wives to the large dinner-parties of fourteen, sixteen, or eighteen which my mother was in the habit of giving. Nothing but her charm and ability as a hostess could have brought these gatherings together. Certainly the material delights were scanty. My father looked after the wine, and that, at any rate, was admirable; but my mother's housekeeping capacities were distinctly limited. She always gave the same "dinner-party dinner," because, as she said, nobody came twice within a few months, and by the time six months had elapsed they had quite forgotten what they had eaten. It was a long time before I persuaded her even to have a bill of fare. As she said, she did not wish to draw attention to the dinner, and after our marriage St. Loe thought this a very wise precaution. The meal was of a length which nowadays we should feel intolerable. There was soup and

fish, not less than two entrées (one of them always a most detestable dish of veal quenelles, which were as solid as cement!), a joint, and game. Then came the great high light of the dinner, an admirable iced soufflé. This was the only dish which the cook whom my mother employed for parties made really well, and we always had it. So, alas, did we always have the veal quenelles. The company was arranged at a long table, which had room for two at each end, and round these ends my mother gathered a little group of good talkers and listeners, leaving their duller partners to the desert in the middle, where, when I first grew up, I always found my place. My mother had an immense love of general conversation, and, if my father contributed very little to the talk, he, at any rate, had the faculty of being an admirable listener. I remember well a dinner to which Lord Houghton was invited to meet the Duc de Broglie. He described to the Duke (by that time I was promoted to sitting much nearer the more amusing end of the table) his own efforts to induce a certain French Ambassador to make friends with the interesting and intellectual section of London Society. "But the X's would have none of it, and consorted with rich fashionable people until at last they saw none but '*les gens les plus stupides que vous avez jamais vus.*'" Lord Houghton's French was an exact translation of his English, delivered with an accent astonishing to ears polite.

Obviously St. Loe could not be content, out of holiday time, with his *Spectator* work, a weekly article for the *Economist*, and the editorship of the *Liberal Unionist*. In the autumn of 1888 he heard from his friend, Mr. C. L. Graves, that the *Standard* was looking for a leader-writer. After an interview, Mr. Mudford, who was the soul of the *Standard* for twenty years, wrote him a charming letter

offering him the vacancy caused by Mr. Sidney Low becoming Editor of the *St. James's Gazette*. The offer was for three leaders a week, two leaders, those of Wednesday and Sunday, to be night work, and the third either a light article written early in the afternoon or a review. The reviews had to be concocted at lightning speed. The book used to arrive about one, or even two, o'clock, and the printer's boy called at six or seven, which meant that whole pages had to be torn out and no book could be read with that attention which the future Editor of the *Spectator* thought ought to be devoted to it. St. Loe did not like that piece of his work at all. The pay was to be £12 10s. a week, and as far as I remember it was paid monthly. There was to be four weeks' holiday on full pay, but St. Loe, at my instigation, always took six, so that the salary came to slightly over £600 a year.

Naturally, with this amount of night work, we could not live either in South Kensington or in someone else's house. Everything had to centre round St. Loe's work on Sundays and Wednesdays, not to speak of Monday and Thursday mornings, when perfect quiet was necessary. Just then the bachelor establishment in South Molton Street was breaking up. This had consisted of a quartette comprising two Strachey and two Mallet brothers, and, after St. Loe's marriage, three Mallets and one Strachey. We decided to take a flat somewhere in the Victoria Street region, where St. Loe's beloved brother Harry had his studio, and to ask him to make his winter home with us. My rule against writing of living people forbids me to write of the ties which united Harry and St. Loe. It is enough to say that he and Bernard Mallet were St. Loe's life-long friends, they were consulted in every crisis, and were sharers in many of his intellectual pleasures. Harry lived with us for

months in the flat we took in Members' Mansions, and Bernard Mallet came across from the Treasury to lunch with us at least once a week. No. 28, Members' Mansions was a very peculiar flat. In the first place, it was on three floors, but our ground floor was, I think, the sixth in the Mansions, and we had our own regular front-door and small inside staircase. Great was my delight at setting up our household gods for the first time. The drawing-room was a very good size, and was the first of the four turquoise and gold London drawing-rooms which I have inhabited for the last forty years. The question of furniture was difficult. St. Loe had some, and I had, or claimed, certain furniture in our rooms at Cornwall Gardens, which my indulgent parents smiled at my removing. We had also a very long chesterfield sofa, which we had bought in the Fulham Road for five guineas in the first months of our marriage. It is in the house where I write, and is as comfortable, and as ugly, to-day as it was then. We mustered all this furniture together, looked well at our accounts, and determined that we could not afford to spend more than fifty pounds on setting up house. Incredible as it seems, we kept within our estimate, and the result, though simple, was anything but unpleasing. The removal of our own pieces of furniture, wedding presents, etc., was paid for by the fact that the firm we employed smashed a particularly ugly but fragile vase, which we both detested. It had been a wedding present, was very valuable, and the removers were only too pleased to find that we accepted the cancelling of their bill as an equivalent for the loss of the vase. So everyone was happy.

My old house-keeping books give some idea of the incredible cheapness of living in those days. I well remember that when we did our budgeting for Members' Mansions, we

allowed five pounds a week for what is known to all house-keepers as "the books." The family consisted of St. Loe and me, Baby, a nurse, a cook, and a house-parlour-maid—five adults and a baby ; and when Harry was not there, five pounds a week was so much too much that I very soon said to St. Loe that it was ridiculous to budget for that amount. £3 10s. was as much as the food and the washing ever averaged a week. I did the marketing myself, for it is quite certain that to get good food you must pay in one commodity or other, money or time. Naturally the assistant who is selling legs of mutton will give a better one to the irascible lady who pokes it with her finger than to the indolent person who orders it on a postcard. I early set my face against the system of tradesmen calling for orders. That leads to a pernicious waste of money, and, living close to the Army and Navy Stores, it was easy to avoid. Lest I should be taking too much credit to myself, I may say that the weekly books are all the accounts I was ever able to keep. St. Loe always said his banker kept his accounts in the pass-book, for he paid everything by cheque. But this would not do for the weekly bills. As soon as we were married St. Loe made me free of his banking account, on which we drew equally, and not till the Newlands Corner Hospital taught me how valuable a detailed analysis may be—as long as it is kept by somebody else—did we have any check on our expenditure but that of the household books and the pass-book. I find, however, a paper dated 1890, which, apparently compiled from the pass-book, shows that in that year our total expenditure was £982 15s. 2d. The rent of our flat was £160, which I think, as the flat had ten rooms besides an enormous bathroom, and that hot water was supplied by the Mansions, was cheap even for those days. The items as to the price

of coal make one's mouth water, for, there being no central heating, we depended for cooking and warming, though not, as I say, for hot water, on coal fires. As far as I can see, I was entirely right as to the food and washing costing about £3 10s. a week. The next year for which I kept detailed figures was 1899, when, my mother having left London, we were entertaining my father at 14, Cornwall Gardens, the household had swollen to eight people, and the babies were two. In that year we spent £430 on housekeeping, including entertainments. One cannot but be tantalised by the cheapness of the entertaining. A record of a dinner-party followed by an evening party gives the figure of £4 11s. 4d., the meat and chickens having come to £1 16s. A whole series of Friday parties gives approximately the same figure. It will be seen that an income of about £1,100 (£600 from the *Standard*, £400 from the *Spectator* and *Economist*, and £100 from my people) went a great deal further in the nineties than would be the case now. After the closing of the hospital in 1919 we took the excellent model prepared by the treasurer, and ever since all our accounts have been minutely kept by St. Loe's secretary. So much for money.

Socially we had immense fun in Members' Mansions. True to my mother's tradition, hardly had we got in when I gave an evening party as a house-warming. It was extraordinary the number of her distinguished old friends who were good enough to come. Of them I specially remember Lord and Lady Arthur Russell, who were always kindness itself to us both. Of Lord Arthur's friendship with St. Loe he has given so full an account in his autobiography that I cannot touch on it here. At any rate, our house-warming was a great success and our pretty drawing-room filled to overflowing. A formal party was all very well to

show people where we lived, but we could not expect our friends to care to come in this way very often. We took to having little tiny evening parties after a dinner of about six or eight, and in the corner of the postcard on which I used to invite people I put, to the scandal of the conventional, "Coffee and cigarettes." This was all the entertainment which was offered, and I remember well a Victorian hostess, who prided herself on her liberal views, asking me whether the housemaid did not very much object to the quantities of cigarette ash which must bestrew the room next morning. Now that the housemaid herself openly smokes cigarettes, this idea that cigarettes could possibly be objected to by the maids sounds far-fetched ; but in the year 1890 the smoking room was still a feature of most houses, and my coffee and cigarettes were considered very free and easy. My tiny household delighted in parties ; but the little house-parlourmaid, who came from the country, occasionally indulged in decided eccentricities in the matter of announcement. I remember well Mr., now Sir, Cecil Harcourt-Smith, coming to dinner, and Lena, as her name was, solemnly opening the door and announcing "Cecil Smith." I conclude he had given his name without a prefix and that she thought "Cecil" a new title.

But not only did we entertain pretty frequently. We also went out to many houses where St. Loe was sure of getting good talk. Lady Arthur Russell's weekly Thursdays in No. 2, Audley Square were quite delightful. On one occasion St. Loe was at a man's dinner and I went alone, having said that if he did not arrive by eleven o'clock I should go home. Eleven o'clock came and no St. Loe, so I bundled into a hansom, which, after the cabman against my wishes had let down the glass, set off

at an erratic walk down Tilney Street. Slower and slower we went, and great was my relief when, having turned the corner into Park Lane, the horse, apparently of its own accord, stopped by the kerb of the pavement. I poked up the little trap-door at the back, but could get no answer at all from the driver, and at last with infinite pains I succeeded in raising the front glass sufficiently to allow me partially to open the wooden doors, which enabled me to escape on to the pavement. Back I fled up Great Stanhope Street, the driver still giving no sign of life, and my relief was great when on getting back to Audley Square I observed St. Loe just making a belated appearance.

On Sunday afternoons, too, we used to go out calling together, notably at the house and flat of two wonderfully able old ladies of a former generation. One was Mrs. Ralph Dutton in West Halkin Street. I remember calling on her in 1899 just when the bye-elections were going very badly for the Conservative Government. We arrived there one Sunday afternoon, and found that she had heard of yet another death among the Conservative Members. She animadverted against their general slackness and incapacity, and ended, "and they cannot even keep alive!" Mrs. Proctor, the widow of Barry Cornwall the poet, was another Victorian who delighted in St. Loe's society. She gave vent one Sunday when we called on her to the following dictum, "During the course of a long life there are few parts of my friends' persons that I have not seen exposed at one time or another by the dictates of fashion." Had she seen the facilities which the years 1928-9 have provided in the study of the anatomy of the female knee, she would have been even more sure of the truth of her observations.

It was in the late autumn of 1890 that we went over to Ireland, first to stay with the T. W. Russells in their temperance hotel in Dublin, and then to see for ourselves what Belfast was like. Just about that time Mr. William O'Brien had been married to a Miss Raffalovich. With regard to the bride, we were told a beautiful story of an Irish priest who said to his friend, "What a pity it is that the new Mrs. O'Brien is so plain!" "How do you know?" said the friend. "Have you seen a photograph of her?" "Faith, no, but unless she were ugly, Vanus herself would not have been in it with her in the daily papers." Mrs. O'Brien was the sister of an enterprising young man named M. André Raffalovich, who wrote verses and gave endless parties in a flat in Albert Hall Mansions. Oscar Wilde unkindly said of him, "Raffalovich wanted to hold a *salon*, and succeeded in opening a buffet"—a phrase which delighted the malicious. I only remember that I enjoyed the parties very much, and that on one occasion my dinner partner was a young Mr. H. H. Johnston (Sir Harry Johnston), who talked to me of blood and cannibals.

From Dublin we had made a dash down to Tipperary, then in a ruinous condition owing to the riots. Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien had just broken their bail and levanted to France. It was only a short time later that evidence in the Parnell divorce case proved that Mr. Parnell on a certain occasion, when visiting Mrs. O'Shea, had got away down the fire-escape—a circumstance which, combined with the O'Brien-Dillon feat, caused Lord Salisbury's well-known comment in a speech on the Irish leaders: "some escape by fire—some by water!" Mr. Parnell's get-away had its effect on our flat, for, on our observing to the management of Members' Mansions that

we were not safe from fire, an elaborate system of iron balconies was arranged and a huge notice painted on the wall by the front door of our flat, "This way to the Fire Escape."

I had almost written that Belfast was the first example we had ever seen of an American city, and indeed its push and go and the liveliness of its commercial life struck us profoundly. The beauty of its site also impressed us, for the view of Mount Divis, of which one has a glimpse at the end of every street, reminded us of some of the towns in North Italy.

After visiting shipyards and linen factories, and seeing politicians in Belfast, we carried out our usual plan of trying to see the countryside, and hired an "outside car," in which we went round the coast of Antrim and surveyed the Giant's Causeway. Nothing could exceed the soft beauty of the Irish scenery or the kind hospitality of the people to whom we took introductions.

We came back from Ireland strengthened in our previous political opinions, and St. Loe more than ever resolved to oppose any Home Rule Bill from which Ulster was not excluded.

CHAPTER V

NEWLANDS CORNER

As I have already hinted, St. Loe could never reconcile himself to the idea of his home being in London, and suffered from a sort of nostalgia for life in the country. All the summer of 1890 we looked for a couple of acres of ground in a secluded spot on which we could put up a wooden cottage to use for what would now be called "the week-end." Our week-end was to be of a peculiar sort. The going to press of the *Spectator* and the third *Standard* leader alike allowed us to get away on Friday evening, but owing to the Sunday night work we had to return on Sunday afternoon. At last a house-agent told us that there were a hundred acres of farm land to be sold at Newlands Corner. Full of the recollection of our drive on the Merrow Downs, we rushed down and saw that the Merrow, Albury and Clandon Downs were even more beautiful than we remembered. Our visit to Mr. Bowles (Lord Onslow's agent) was rather disappointing. He did not at all want to sell little bites out of the farm land, but he did want very much to let the farmhouse, marked in the ordnance map as "Newlands House" and now known as Newlands Farm. This had been inhabited by an old lady and her daughter, who were leaving at Michaelmas, 1890. The farm itself was in hand and worked by a bailiff, who lived in the black cottage close to the farmhouse. Mr. Bowles wished to retain the right of giving six months'

notice to the tenant of the farmhouse, in case he let the farm as a whole and the black cottage was not found to give sufficient accommodation for the new tenant. This did not quite suit us, and we made terms, which were that we should take the farmhouse if the Estate would covenant to sell us a special two acres of the farm land at any time that six months' notice was given on either side. Mr. Bowles promised to put the house in order and to allow a certain sum for decorations, which were sadly needed.

No one who knows the two roads over the hill to-day can have the slightest idea of what a desolate spot Newlands Corner was in the year 1890. There was no post, there was no water ; there was no noise of any sort. Occasionally a cart rumbled by past the high hedge which bordered the farmhouse garden, but no one at all seemed to drive up Clandon Hill, though a certain number of picnickers in the summer came up from Merrow Church and from Shere and Albury. Therefore our tiny garden overshadowed by a big apple-tree, was entirely secluded and the desired peace and quiet easily obtainable. It was, and is, a very pretty little house. There is a charming miniature hall, with a staircase going up at the back behind an arch, which we painted in yellow and white. To the amazement of the few passers-by, we painted the front door bright yellow and had a black iron " swastika " for a door-knocker. The drawing-room had in those days no window on to the road, but only a bow window at the end, looking into the garden. Three more ground-floor rooms and four little bed-rooms above completed the accommodation, and in the late autumn of 1890 St. Loe and I and Harry resolved to go down for a week-end picnic without any servants. The bailiff, Mr. Watson, who lived next door, was six foot high and had a dignity of

manner which I have never seen exceeded. His wife, a little, sturdy, round-about body, was the greatest comfort, for whenever we were not at Newlands she would go in and light the fires and open the windows. When we went down for that first week-end, she was both scandalised and surprised to hear that I had never lighted a kitchen fire in my life. However, greatly daring, we resolved to cook the dinner, which we did with considerable success, the only drawback being that there was an interval of half an hour between each course, of which we attempted three. We ate it in the little room leading out of the kitchen, and Harry absolutely insisted on taking off his coat and dining in his shirt-sleeves because he said it was "in the picture." Such was our first night at Newlands Corner, where forty years of our lives were to be spent.

At that special place on the Downs the Clandon and Albury Estates meet, and the little larchwood which was just through our garden gate belonged, we were told, to the Duke of Northumberland ; so down we went to the office of Mr. Peebles, his then agent, and induced the Albury Estate to let us the larchwood for £12 a year. There we slung our hammocks, and in the hot summers, which seem to me to have prevailed then, found shade and shelter on Sundays, for the plan of St. Loe going up to London for Sunday night work was not to materialise.

In the autumn I had not been at all pleased with St. Loe's health. He seemed to me to be working a great deal too hard and to be below par. He was also rather fretted by his work on the *Standard*, for Mr. Mudford, who had the same ideas as to journalism as St. Loe, had passed much of the responsibility of editorship to his second-in-command, Mr. Byron Curtis, whom St. Loe particularly

disliked. I don't think that the night work worried him so much as the constant requests, having almost the form of orders, from Mr. Curtis to do what St. Loe considered bad work. There was once a journalist who adopted as his motto the phrase, "The leader-writer who stops to think is lost." Such was Mr. Byron Curtis' opinion, and he obviously found himself quite unable to understand the original ideas which St. Loe never could keep out of his articles. All this I represented to him ; but, as he represented to me, we had about £1,100 a year all told, of which over £600 a year was provided by the *Standard*. We had just taken a second house, and it was quite impossible for him to give up the appointment. I of course, saw the force of his arguments ; but as a counter-blast I pointed out to him that we had no money at all except that which he earned, and that it was extremely foolish to kill the goose which laid the golden eggs.

My arguments continued for a long time to be of no avail, but at last one evening, quite early in the New Year (1891), I was lying resting on the big chesterfield sofa after dinner, and St. Loe was sitting by the fire looking very pale and distinctly under the weather. I remember laying down my book, sitting up, turning round to him, and saying that we really must trust to luck in the future and that he must not destroy his health. This time he listened ; but, of course, the financial situation was very awkward. As far as I remember, we had the flat for another year, and we were both too much enamoured of Newlands to give up the little farm. Also, the first influenza epidemic was just beginning to rage, and I never looked at our little boy Tommy, by that time over two years old, without shivering. We resolved to leave London altogether at Easter, to go to Newlands, and to try to let the flat. This

we succeeded in doing to tenants who actually took it furnished for the rest of our lease.

The kind Chiefs of the *Spectator* eased the financial situation a little by promising St. Loe work up to £500 a year, inclusive, of course, of the autumn work. But, as we had spent £982 15s. 2d. the year before and could not in any way muster more than £800 for this year, the situation was anxious. However, down we went to Newlands, Tommy and all. But we had hardly got settled when a bolt from the blue plunged my people into horrified sorrow. My brother, Walter Simpson, was a lieutenant in the 43rd Gurkha Light Infantry, and in the early days of April the first rumours of the massacre at Manipur made us all very anxious, although we had no reason to suppose that Walter was anywhere except at his own headquarters. My mother was with my uncle in Jersey. She had suffered from very bad bronchitis all the winter, and we were all looking for a country house for her. The rumours became worse and worse, and she must have got home early in April. On April 1st, we heard that Mr. Quinton, the Chief Commissioner, and the officers who had accompanied him in his unfortunate parley with the people of Manipur, had all been murdered. I cannot even now bear to write of the details which came through as to this outrage. It suffices to say that so far as the kindness of the officials availed to give help to my father in his great sorrow, it was given. I remember sitting in the drawing-room at 14, Cornwall Gardens when St. Loe's uncle, Sir John Strachey, then on the Council of India, came to see my father, and feeling for the first time the futility of reprisals when he told us, wishing to be consoling, that whatever the Government could do by way of punishment would assuredly be done. What was the good of that when

nothing could bring Walter back? We had always known that he and his Gurkhas were on the most affectionate terms. He loved the valiant little dark men, to whom his 6 ft. 3 in. of height must have been most impressive. It is pleasant to hear that my elder brother, General Simpson, when in India the other day, visited the headquarters of the 43rd Gurkha Light Infantry and found that Walter was not forgotten.

We could not go back to London to be with my father and mother because our flat was first occupied by St. Loe's elder brother and his wife, and was then let. Also, whatever we had wished to do, St. Loe in his journeys to London got his first attack of real influenza, which he brought down to the little house. We put Tommy to sleep and live well out of the way in the drawing-room, where he astonished us all by saying he had seen a bear come through the wall. I proceeded to nurse St. Loe till I succumbed myself. I shall never forget the sad little promenades we took when convalescing. It was a very cold May, and we looked out of the window at blossom and snowflakes lying together under the apple-tree.

Very soon after that the condition of my uncle's health forced my mother back to Jersey, whither I escorted her, as she was quite unfit to go alone. There I remember I was marooned owing to summer storms and had to put off my journey home from day to day. Poor little Tommy, being always told I was coming to-morrow, at last asked with a heavy sigh, "*What is to-morrer?*"

At the end of that summer my people took Millmead House, a delightful Georgian house at Guildford, which in many ways exactly suited them. It was so near the station that it was quite possible for my father to go up and down, my mother could have as many people to stay

as she wanted, and there were many old friends and pleasant people in Guildford and the neighbourhood who were delighted to come and see her. At the same time would-be tenants came incessantly to see the little farmhouse at Newlands, and we found that a tenancy at six months' notice was too unsettling. After a night of heavy rain, accordingly, we walked through the turnip field which adjoined the farmhouse, and measured out two acres in a long strip. I can hear the squelch of the water in our boots whenever I think of it. Of course, the larch-wood through which our drive could run became a considerable asset, and we were allowed by the Albury Estate to take it on a ninety-nine years' lease.

My father and mother did not want to give up Cornwall Gardens, and therefore we settled down to the following mode of life. We lived in their house in the winter, they keeping their rooms and my father coming up from Millmead to dine and sleep two or three times a week. At Easter we departed to Newlands, and my mother had her season. It all answered very well, and continued for the next nine or ten years.

The winter 1891-2 was the first that we spent in 14, Cornwall Gardens "on our own." The coffee and cigarette parties were greatly improved by the large drawing-room, and many people who were then distinguished, and more who have since become so (I see mentioned Austen Chamberlain, his sister, Alfred Milner, etc.), journeyed to South Kensington for an evening chat.

In the drawing-room hung, as it still hangs before me as I write, the full-length portrait by Watts of my mother, painted in the year 1857. I remember very well Mr. D. S. McColl bringing to Cornwall Gardens a young artist named Mr. William Rothenstein and their standing in

admiration before the portrait, with which they found but one fault. Watts had forced my mother to take off her crinoline, and she stands, a graceful figure, in the full pleated skirt which she wore in the evening at home. She always told me it was the first manifestation of the tea-gown. The youthful art critics thought the costume a great pity—they considered a crinoline picture would have been much more “interesting.”

And here to digress a moment. I should like to enter a protest against the animadversions which are hurled by the young on women's clothes in the late eighties and nineties. It is quite true that hideous illustrations from fashion papers of the day are produced to prove in what grotesque guise women habitually went about ; but I suggest that it is the fashion artists, and not the fashions, who have so greatly improved. No one can study the volumes of *Punch* of Du Maurier's date without being struck by the beautiful lines which some of the full garments of those days could be made to take. In the *Punch* of October 31st, 1891, there is a picture of an elderly woman whose gracious aspect compares favourably with the dowagers of the present day. The fashion artists, however, do not now draw old women, so that the females of 1925 onwards will doubtless go down to posterity as nymphs and huntresses who have murdered their elderly contemporaries. When I complained a year or two ago at a celebrated *salon* for dresses that the confections were only suitable to people under thirty, I was reproached by the sales lady with being ungrateful to a firm which catered specially for “smart matrons.” Who would dare insult Du Maurier's stately dowagers by calling them “smart matrons” ? On the whole, however, it must be conceded that women's dress was not so practical, but ugly it was not. To critics who

say that the beauty lies in Du Maurier's pencil and that the clothes were ugly in real life I shall answer, "You never saw the Miss Du Mauriers when they were young."

In the second winter of our Cornwall Gardens time the death of Renan vividly recalled to me the big party in the same drawing-room, which had been given by my mother in the year 1880, for which I had been allowed to sit up. I remembered Renan's remark, quoted by my mother in her *Memories*—"They all stood up like trees to talk." How I wished I could have that fat, suave figure seated at one of my tiny parties discoursing, as I had heard him in Paris, to a general circle of delighted guests.

In the year 1896 we ourselves gave a party in Cornwall Gardens which was almost as interesting. On one of our first visits to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Chamberlain at Highbury—visits to which we owe many friends and the most delightful memories—we had driven up in the Highbury station omnibus with Mr. John Hay, then just appointed American Ambassador, and his wife and daughter. The acquaintance had ripened into friendship over St. Loe's paper on Lincoln, published that same spring in his collection of essays, *From Grave to Gay*. At that time we were seeing a good deal of Mr. Stephen Phillips, whose personality and powers Mr. Sidney Colvin, in a letter dated April 17th, 1896, had specially recommended to my husband as having in him "to my mind . . . the original stuff and fibre of poetry." Mr. Phillips had just published a little book called *Christ in Hades*, and Mr. Colvin in the same letter says, "Much to my disappointment, Hutton has written to my young friend Stephen Phillips saying he don't like his poem well enough to review it : acknowledging that 'every line seems to show the poet,' but saying it has no 'wholeness,' and being shocked at Christ and

Prometheus appearing in a kind of equality." St. Loe obviously talked Mr. Hutton over, for on May 2nd a review of the poem duly appeared, bracketed with Mr. Bridges' *Ode for the Bicentenary Commemoration of Henry Purcell*. From internal evidence I judge the article to have been by St. Loe. The outcome of this review was a friendship between St. Loe and Stephen Phillips. One evening early in 1896 the American Ambassador, with Mrs. Hay and their daughter, promised to come to a small dinner-party and afterwards Mr. Stephen Phillips very kindly consented to read his poems to our dinner guests and the "tail" of friends who came in afterwards for coffee and cigarettes. (I suppose in deference to Mr. Phillips' voice the cigarettes were more or less suppressed on that occasion). I have always loved Mr. Phillips' poems, and I remember to this day the beauty of his voice and the simplicity with which he read his own verses. Mr. Hay was considerably impressed. The little paper-covered volume of *Christ in Hades, and Other Poems*, published by Elkin Matthews, is still in our library.

But we had not always such highbrow parties as Stephen Phillips' poetry recital. We once kicked up our heels in a dance, which was great fun. My sister-in-law, Frances Strachey, was the excuse. As we could not afford a sit-down supper, we gave it on a Saturday, and at twelve o'clock had tables wheeled in with soup, mulled claret and cigarettes. Much good talk ensued, and the last guest, Lord Morpeth, did not depart till two.

The big house was, of course, to a certain extent a care. I see in the same letter to my mother which describes the dance that "All the taps of father's bath are constantly engaged in going wrong. The plumber lives here, and

makes matters *much* worse every time he comes." Why do plumbers never reform?

It was in our first winter at Cornwall Gardens (1891) that the second great crusade of St. Loe's political life cast its shadow before it. In answer to notes in *The News of the Week* on a speech of Lord Salisbury's at Birmingham, Mr. Henry Grenfell wrote to him from the Bank of England on December 5th, 1891 :

"DEAR MR. STRACHEY,—You seem to imagine that all the enlightened world agree in the opinion that Free Trade is absolutely good and Protection absolutely bad.

"Bright and his friends had got to think that there was something divine about Free Trade and, as I once told him, that our respected progenitrix Eve was seduced by a serpent on whose head was written 'Pro,' and on whose back was seen 'tec,' and on whose tail was found 'tion.'

"They had also persuaded themselves that the working classes of England were so far in advance of all others in education and knowledge that they could solve a very difficult economical problem and enforce its political application on their rulers.

"Nothing could be historically more incorrect. The Anti-Corn Law League was financed by a set of men who wanted commercial profits got partly by cheap wages. Its political and intellectual triumphs were due to the accidental excellence of the men who advocated its doctrines. It was a democratic movement run by masters against men. Their lever was based on the accusation that the rulers of the land were deriving increased revenues by enhancing the price of the bread of the artisan. To this argument no reply was possible but surrender. To that surrender we owe that when all Europe was convulsed

in 1848, we alone were at peace at home. And for that peace we have to thank the orators of the Anti-Corn Law League. We give them their due. As a bimetallist I utterly deny that the period of great prosperity which followed was due to Free Trade any more than the procession of the equinoxes is due to it. . . .”

Mr. Grenfell goes on to discuss the difference between the practice of America, with her inter-state Free Trade, and Great Britain's practice of allowing her colonies to levy protective duties against each other and against the mother-country. This led to an interesting correspondence between him and St. Loe on the American Constitution. How much effect this correspondence had on St. Loe's opinions will be no secret to those who remember the line on Free Trade taken by the *Spectator* in the early years of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER VI

THE WORLD AWHEEL

With the Cornwall Gardens plan of leaving London at Easter, it became urgently necessary to have something settled at Newlands, and we instantly began to put up a house on the two acres of land which we had bought from Lord Onslow. I made the plan on half a sheet of notepaper, and I may say here that subsequently, when we enlarged the house, I continued to make the plan, with results which our son-in-law, Clough Williams-Ellis, has since regarded in an embarrassed and pained silence. In 1891 we handed our plans round to our friends, who all made different criticisms. We tried in vain to find a name for the house. I suggested to my mother that we should call it "Pen House" in allusion to the implement which built it. But when the post office said that we were to put Merrow on our notepaper, we felt that we could not pester people with a fourfold address, and we never called the old house anything but Newlands Corner. By that time St. Loe's correspondence had resulted in our having a postal delivery ; but we got it from Merrow, and thus the little new house had Merrow as its postal address, was situated in the parish of Albury, while its station and natural village were Clandon. Indeed, that house (now the hotel), and this one, Harrowhill Copse, in which I write, are in that position still.

My plan on its half-sheet of notepaper, with all the

sizes and aspects of the rooms, was handed by a certain Mr. Allen (who had a patent system of building in cement slabs) to the firm of William Lord & Company, who certainly made the best of a system which I do not think very satisfactory. Though I knew what we wanted to live in, I knew also that I was not an expert, and I therefore asked the builders how much space they wanted for the staircase and left it to them. It was the only thing which went wrong. They had measured quite inadequately, and the result was three narrow, winding stairs on our only staircase down which our family and friends have tumbled for the last thirty-five years. The ground floor comprised a drawing-room, dining-room, an open-air *loggia* 12 ft. square, and a sitting-room hall, and in order to make the last named bigger, St. Loe insisted that the front door should open outwards. There were three rather steep steps up to it, and when the door was pushed outwards, the waiting guest was swept off the top step as with a battering-ram. After a very few months the door had to be re-hung. The canary-coloured paint and black swastika door-knocker came on with us. The house was in three storeys. St. Loe had a study in the attic, and we actually mustered, including the nurseries, ten bed-rooms of the most minute proportions, in which very distinguished company often cheerfully assembled.

Our first week-end visitor was Lord Morpeth, a dear friend, whom again we owed to the parties at Highbury. Poor man ! He spent the whole week-end with one foot up the drawing-room chimney, the builders having carefully arranged to leave a brick behind the register, which on the smallest provocation fell down, the consequence being a room filled with smoke.

Very early in the Newlands career, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney

Webb, Mr. Bernard Shaw, and Mr. Graham Wallas arrived in a walking-party to dine and sleep. Great was my anxiety as a very young house-keeper as to whether the lentil cutlets provided for Mr. Bernard Shaw would nourish him sufficiently ; but we all talked so fast in the nineties that I don't think anybody attended to the dinner. I remember on another occasion Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Courtney proving most delightful visitors, while Mr. and Mrs. James Bryce, who were walking from Dorking to Guildford, came in to lunch soaked to the skin. We had great fun trying to fit them up with our mackintoshes.

It was to Lord Morpeth and Mr. Sidney Webb that I owed my introduction to public work. During that Saturday to Monday Lord Morpeth asked me if I should like to be a school manager, and later, when I had talked to Mr. Sidney Webb of the needs of the older girls for instruction in domestic science on leaving school, he appointed me as a representative of the L.C.C. on the Governing Body of the Chelsea Polytechnic. My then colleagues, who were all men, are most of them dead or have left the Governing Body, so I may say quite frankly that they were none of them at all pleased to see their first woman colleague.

But it was not always Saturday to Monday, and I confess that, hardened Cockney as I was, even Newlands bored me when St. Loe went up to London. I have no real country pursuits, and I rather agree with my old governess that London is the place for hot weather, because you can always walk on the shady side of the street.

Mr. Stephen Phillips was not the only poet who came to see us, for I remember that Mr. William Watson, after a walk on the Merrow Downs, spent a meditative

afternoon in a hammock in the larchwood. This resulted in that extremely fine poem, *The Father of the Forest*, which will give anyone who cares to look it up more of the history of England and of our Downs than any other single document that I know.

In 1893, the year after the house was built, I remember great excitement in a large party in the open-air *loggia*. In that September the House of Lords threw out Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill. I do not remember what was said, but I do remember Mr. H. A. L. Fisher being very eloquent and instructive.

An amusing domestic episode is connected in my mind with the little house a year or two after we first built it. St. Loe had been in active correspondence with an Australian writer called Mr. Fitchett, whose first book, *Deeds That Won The Empire*, had, in consequence of a *Spectator* review, excited a great deal of attention. "A drop of ink at the end of your husband's pen changed the whole course of my life. No one in England read my work before his review." So said Mr. Fitchett to me when he and his son arrived for lunch at Newlands in the course of their first visit to England. It was a fine summer day and the little house was bathed in sunshine. To make things merry for his guests, St. Loe had set to work in the morning to brew a bowl of cider-cup—a beverage he greatly affected. I saw him do it. In went the cider, in went a generous dose of sherry, a whole bottle of white wine and lots of lemon and sugar. A bit of borage was procured with the blue flower on it to float upon the top, and the drink was ready to put in the ice-box. What were my feelings during luncheon to hear Mr. Fitchett recommend it to his son as a temperance drink, for they were both Blue Ribbon. My veracity warred with my

hospitality, and I am glad to say that the hospitality won.

Even Newlands could not keep St. Loe well, and bouts of rheumatism led to his consulting Dr. Mortimer Granville, who for a time did him a great deal of good by putting him on a diet of red meat and port—first of the many diets which we tried hopefully one after the other.

It will be remembered that after the rejection of the Home Rule Bill, Mr. Gladstone neither resigned nor dissolved. We went to a great party that winter ('93-94), which the new Duchess of Devonshire gave at Devonshire House. It was the first time that I had seen the truly English fusion which is made out of office hours by English statesmen. The whole Cabinet and ex-Cabinet were there—the Gladstonians in uniform, and the Tories, looking infinitely distinguished, in evening dress.

Very early in the year 1894 there were rumours that Mr. Gladstone was going to resign, and in March the Premiership passed to Lord Rosebery. Everybody was delighted, except Mrs. Earle, who was an ardent Liberal. I remember very well our going to see her one Sunday afternoon and finding her by no means joining in the general chorus of congratulation, for, she said, when a statesman's political opponents are pleased to see him become Prime Minister it does not argue well for the prosperity of his Party.

Later in the summer Mr. Knowles of the *Nineteenth Century* got into communication with St. Loe as to an article which they jointly planned on the diverse personalities of the new Premier. There accordingly appeared in an early autumn number of the magazine a brilliant satire from St. Loe's pen entitled *The Seven Lord Roseberies*. The text was taken from an account of the Prime Minister written by an admirer, Mr. Arthur Wallace, under six

heads—‘The Man,’ ‘The Radical,’ ‘The Home-Ruler,’ ‘The Municipalist,’ and so on. But, said St. Loe :

“ A careful review of the different individualities which make up the multiplex personality of the Premier will show that Mr. Wallace has understated his case, and that there are at least seven Lord Roseberies, each with a distinct and sometimes antagonistic set of opinions and methods of action. They may be arranged according to the following list :

1. The Home Rule Lord Rosebery.
2. The Unionist Lord Rosebery.
3. The Democratic, Socialist, Labour-Radical Lord Rosebery.
4. Lord Rosebery the Political Boss.
5. Lord Rosebery the man above Party.
6. Lord Rosebery the Sphinx.
7. The Newmarket Lord Rosebery.”

These seven personalities were accordingly analysed and the question asked, Which of the seven is the real man, or, if the real man is not one of them, what is he? In conclusion, an amusing contrast was drawn between the fact that Rosebery’s want of conviction had resulted in the failure of his Premiership, while that of Disraeli had turned out a brilliant success. “ There was, however, this difference. . . . The seven Disraelis were consecutive, not simultaneous creations.” The article was much talked of, and Mr. Knowles wrote enthusiastically of the way in which St. Loe had executed his task.

In our private life an enormous access of happiness came to us in the spring of 1894. A little daughter arrived to bless the new house, as lovely and exquisite a baby as our dear

Tommy had been ugly. She was brought up in the garden. At a very early age she was put into her pram just under the window and left there—of course, with a hot-water bottle. I don't think that the intelligent young mothers of the present day, with their Froebel, Montessori, and Dalton and Mason plans, can have an idea how little help one got in the problem of education in the nineties. I eagerly bought all the books there were on kindergarten, but found them severely technical and chiefly consisting of action songs. The only volume from which I received any help was Mr. Herbert Spencer's essay on Education, recommended to me by the Librarian of the London Library. I have not read it for forty years, but I derived two basic principles from it—the first that all punishment should be the logical consequence of wrong-doing—that is, that if a child were so cross that its presence was unpleasant it should not come down at its accustomed hour. A slap would be an example of an illogical punishment, but the logical sequence of crossness is a disinclination for the society of the cross. Sir W. S. Gilbert said the same thing in *The Mikado* :

*My object all sublime
I shall achieve in time,
To make the punishment fit the crime.*

7

The modern psychological educationalists will recognise that, as far as it goes, this principle is sound.

The second basic principle was given in the form of a little parable. When a man of a later civilisation visits the ruins of London, he will doubtless be interested in studying our system of education. Having done so, he will remain unsatisfied, saying, " But, of course, this was the

curriculum arranged for celibates only. There is no trace left of what was taught to people who were to marry and be the parents of families." The importance of sex education was thus early brought home to me, with considerable results on my future work.

To return to baby Amabel, she remained a baby for a year or two, and thus for a very strictly limited period was not so interesting to me as her elder brother. Notwithstanding my rule of not speaking of living people, she must forgive me if I set down here what is the fact—that at three years old she was the most beautiful human creature that ever delighted the world. Her head was absolutely covered with a mass of golden curls, her eyes were deep blue and enormous, she had the most charming singing voice, and sang quite truly and without mistake all through the many songs in *The Baby's Opera*. We thought she was going to be a musical genius, but the inspiration seemed to leave her a little later. We might have known that her talents would be literary, for at three years old she insisted on having Omar Khayyám read to her, and used to chant to herself extraordinary medleys of the verses, while the lyrics of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* made almost too much impression on her sensitive ear. We had French nursery-maids, and she chattered in French as well as in English, while Tom, whom I tried to teach myself, also insensibly, but rather against his will, learnt the French language.

In the year 1894, with the coming of the safety bicycle, the great craze for bicycling fell on the world. My father had well accustomed us to seeing him on wheels, for at the age of sixty he had taken to a tricycle, on which he rode daily through all the traffic from South Kensington to Lincoln's Inn and back. Whilst I was laid up with my

baby, St. Loe got hold of a bicycle, and as soon as I was better he hired me a tricycle. Although I learnt to manage it, I fell from it so often and so heavily that we soon resolved that a drop-frame bicycle (then just introduced) would be safer. A new balance has never been easy to me, and with pain and grief I learnt to ride. And then a wider world opened before us. Before that we had only had a small governess cart with a perfectly round red pony, and our radius was restricted to what the red pony could trot and we could walk. Now we were free of all the bye-ways of England, and St. Loe wrote lyrically in the *Spectator* of the Song of the Open Road. I remember rising at dawn and bicycling over to breakfast at Liphook, the villages looking strange in the early morning light, and the charm of the new day over the whole countryside. We used to go to Somersetshire, half by train and half bicycling, and the beauties of Marlborough, Savernake Forest and the Wiltshire Downs were revealed to us.

When the winter came and we went to London, we found the whole world awheel in Battersea Park. Every morning from eleven to lunch-time everyone who was idle enough to take two hours off and rich enough to buy or hire a bicycle was to be seen there. Rich and poor, old and young, round we all went and enjoyed ourselves hugely. The company was delightful, and the newness of the rapid motion in the open air most exhilarating. When we were tired of Battersea, we went to Hyde Park, where that portion of the roadway by the Serpentine, which has since been dedicated to the use of the "under-dog," formed a delightful place for going up and down. What changes that road has seen ! First the prancing carriage-horses had to make way for the humble people on bicycles. Then the bicycles made way for the motors, and now

finally the motors are warned off the road, while old ladies in superannuated victorias trot up and down there.

On Sundays we went further afield, and we and the Sidney Webbs had several rides together out of London. I have a little picture in my mind of Mrs. Webb, who rode extremely well, scudding on before us down one of the back streets of Pimlico—I think it was Lupus Street—with both hands behind her back, steering by her pedals. She was a graceful and intrepid rider, and indeed we all fancied ourselves very much on our machines. Mr. H. G. Wells crystallised the whole situation in one of the most exquisite books that he ever wrote. I shall never forget the joy of reading *The Wheels of Chance*, and learning through the eyes of his inspired linen-draper to appreciate the full beauty of the Ripley road. Some years later he and I had a controversy about some criticism which I dared to make of one of his later works. I enquired affectionately as to the fate of Mr. Hoopdriver, and was made very sad by the information that the unfortunate man had got drowned later on, presumably because he bathed on one of his excursions without knowing how to swim.

The young people of the present day will be surprised to hear that in the nineties we all thought ourselves immensely modern and up-to-date. We had never heard of complexes and we did not seek to avoid repressions and inhibitions ; but we were absorbed in trying to “develop our own individuality”—which, on reflection, seems to come to much the same thing. Whenever the 1890-9 youths of both sexes wished to do something bitterly opposed by their family and friends, they solemnly said that the action was entirely necessary, as otherwise they could not develop their individuality to the full. What is this but avoiding a repression ? The only difference seems

to me that we took it in one stage instead of two. The catch-phrase of the slightly decadent was that we were *fin-de-siècle*, and being *fin-de-siècle* embraced all those intelligent, artistic and literary perceptions which had obviously never been arrived at by former generations.

In speaking of the youth of that day I do not mean what one may almost call the professional æsthetes. They were quite a separate concern and legislated for themselves. I speak of the ordinary everyday young people of the intellectual level in which the boys went to Balliol and the girls to Girton or Newnham. The robustly minded turned to athletics, and the liberally minded to introspection. The latter read *The Yellow Book* with infinite pleasure, and indeed it was a highly entertaining publication.

On May 4th, 1896, a young man called Mr. Alfred Harmsworth, who had previously been entirely connected with scissors and paste journalism, published the first of the halfpenny papers, the *Daily Mail*, on which he put a caption which I have never forgotten—"A newspaper, not a soporific." Serious people disapproved; but very shortly they might all have been seen reading it, the excuse they gave being that it was a useful index to what they would subsequently find in *The Times*.

A periodical which ceased in the nineties was the *Liberal Unionist*, which ended in the autumn of '92, the fusion between the Liberal Unionists and the Conservatives seeming too complete for so technical a paper to be carried on.

A little book in which St. Loe set down his earnings shows me that he earned nearly £900 in 1892, rising to £1,000 in '94. It was in the last days of that year that, with increasing expenses and increasing responsibilities on the *Spectator*, the friendly proprietors made further

arrangements that he should do more work and have a salary of £1,200 a year. In those years there are several articles chronicled in the *Edinburgh*, *National* and *Nineteenth Century* Reviews, while for a short time he contributed articles to the *Guardian*. Finance was, therefore, easier, especially as with great luck we succeeded in letting Newlands for two winters running.

In the first months of 1895 our section of the political world was deeply excited by a question which had been raised in the *Spectator* three or four years before. This was the obligatory transference of an "eldest son," sitting in the House of Commons, to the House of Lords on his succession to his father's peerage. The matter was raised by Lord de Mauley in the year 1891 and by an Irish Peer, who suggested in private letters to St. Loe that a test case should be tried in Ireland. The *Spectator* commented on the suggestion in an article with the delightful title, *Are Statesmen Crushed by Coronets?* People took sides with great violence, and Lord Rosebery, in his *Life of Pitt*, came out very strongly against an arbitrary transfer. On the death of Lord Selborne in the first months of 1895 it was determined by a triumvirate of eldest sons, Mr. George Curzon, Mr. St. John Brodrick, and Lord Wolmer, all members of the House of Commons, that the last named should put the question to a definite test. On May 25th the *Spectator* wrote of the result as follows in an article which was quite certainly by St. Loe: "They (the Vacating Seats Committee of the House of Commons) were determined to 'larn' Lord Wolmer to be an Earl, and no considerations of law or usage were to be allowed to stand in the way." How the present Lord Selborne deliberately continued to occupy his seat in the House of Commons till his right to do so was challenged by Mr. Labouchere has lately been

told at length in Lord Ronaldshay's *Life of Lord Curzon*. Finally a writ was issued for the election of a member to fill the seat represented by the new Lord Selborne, and this appears to have ended the matter, for no more was heard of the committee which had been appointed in 1894 to enquire into the legal position. The question was really the first move in that campaign for the Reform of the House of Lords, which, after the lapse of over thirty years, has made no progress whatever.

CHAPTER VII

TRAVEL

Travel played such a large part in our life between 1891 and 1902 that any account of our companionship which left out our voyages together would be very incomplete. St. Loe's holiday was so short that we were never away for more than seven weeks, which, of course, meant that we could only follow the path of the ordinary tourist. We arranged matters as follows. St. Loe chose where we were to go, and I, whose ideal in life is still to be a tourist agent or traffic manager, planned the tour, bargained over fares and took the tickets. I early perceived that if we remained in England on our holiday, although St. Loe did not go to the office, the office most obligingly came down to him ; so I used to tempt him with accounts of places where the sea would roll between him and No. 1, Wellington Street.

In 1894 we paid our first visit to Egypt, memorable to St. Loe as the place where he first met Lord Cromer and founded the friendship which meant so much in his life. We had, of course, letters from St. Loe's uncles, Sir Richard and Sir John Strachey, and a letter from my mother's very old friend, Lady Sligo, to the Agency, and we had hardly landed before we were asked to dine quite alone with the Cromers. The table was laid on the verandah and the heat was intense. One of the first things Lord Cromer said to me, when I complained of the mosquitoes biting my insteps, was, " You should wear two pairs of socks and leather gaiters as I do ! "

St. Loe tells in detail in *The Adventure of Living* how we had not finished dinner before he and Lord Cromer plunged into the whole Egyptian question, and how during our stay their intimacy deepened from day to day. I think it was at this first meeting that Lord Cromer told us, when we said that we were going to the Gizeh Museum, that we should look out for the examples of naturalistic art which belonged to the period long before the archaic art of Egypt.

Amongst the other interesting people whom we met on that occasion was Major, now Sir Reginald, Wingate, whose book on the rescue of Father Ohrwalder, one of the Mahdi's prisoners, had just appeared. I wrote home that Major Wingate had just rescued another prisoner, Father Rossignoli, "and gave us a wonderful account of it all and then took us to his house to see the father. It was most interesting to see a man who two months ago was finishing a fifteen years' captivity among savages ! I mustered up my best Italian and made him give us an account of his escape." Slatin Pasha himself was rescued in the autumn of the next year (1895), and Major Wingate's comment to me was that he would now be able to shut up the Intelligence Department, as Slatin would supply all the facts. The political situation in those days, as is well known, was very much strained between the French and the English, and certain Egyptian papers accused the unfortunate Slatin of being a spy kept in Omdurman by the English Government. Later, when the Wingates visited us at Newlands, Major Wingate sat calmly correcting proofs relating to the most exciting adventures in the peace of the Surrey Downs. Tommy, to whom he was exceedingly kind, asked him where he got the secret ink in which he had communicated with the Mahdi's prisoners. The

romance was slightly damped by the fact that the ink was supplied by the Army and Navy Stores.

I chronicled that on December 1st, 1894, we lunched with Lord Kitchener, then Sirdar of the Egyptian Army.

In November 1895 we took the second part of our Egyptian tour by going up the Nile. This was before the days of the Dam, and Captain Lyons, the well-known engineer, was at the moment engaged in the excavation of Philæ. He showed us the temple on our way up the river and lent us divers enormous tomes to read—St. Loe's on irrigation, and mine on Egyptology. This voyage being two years before the Advance, Nubia was under very strict military law, and when we embarked at the head of the First Cataract to go up to Wadi Halfa, we found that we had many soldiers as our travelling companions. I was not sorry, for before the little sternwheeler started, a great barge was tied on to her side and on to it were marched sixty convicts, chained and in bright yellow dresses. They were chiefly murderers, and I was relieved to find that there was a heavily armed escort of black soldiers who would stand no nonsense.

St. Loe was, as usual, deeply interested in the military situation, and our excursion taken by train from the Second Cataract to Sarras, a lonely fort in the desert, was full of interest. We were thrilled to think that there was nothing between us and the Khalifa. On our way back down the river Captain Lyons took us down the First Cataract, a journey which is, of course, impossible now. I wrote home :

“ We went down the biggest ‘ gate ’ of all, where the tourist is never taken, and which Captain Lyons himself had never been down before. For four or five minutes the

boat rocked and swayed in the rapids like a cockle shell, shipping enormous seas. It was very amusing, and the long row down to Assouan when the exciting time was over was lovely. Our ten boatmen sang wild Arab songs the whole way."

Back in Cairo, we found Slatin Pasha. In order to get about, we hired bicycles, and I was greatly entertained when Slatin, fresh from the perils of his escape from the Soudan, said to me, "*Madame, vous ôsez passer le pont en bicyclette ?*" ("Madame, do you dare go over the bridge on your bicycle ?") It is true it was an alarming experience, because the camels on the Kasr el Nil bridge seemed to take particular delight in weaving their long necks round our machines and looking as if they were just going to bite.

It was in March 1895 that the long correspondence between Lord Cromer and St. Loe started. At first the letters came at considerable intervals, but after a year or two they wrote to each other almost every week till Lord Cromer's death in 1917.

The year 1898 was memorable to us, both for its variety of public events and for the great voyage of our lives—the tour we took in the autumn, riding with a camp from Jerusalem to Jericho. It was only by pointing out that the Near East was an excellent place to get an inside view of what was happening that I got St. Loe—who by September was very tired—to come away at all. Ever since January the political cauldron had boiled over. Mr. Townsend's uncanny flair for coming sensations was never better developed than in his leader of Saturday, January 1st, which he called

"NINETY-EIGHT"

“The year 1898 opens with an impression in men’s minds which may prove to be absolutely unfounded, but which is more generally diffused than any impression of the kind that we can recall within the past half-century. All through Europe men believe, without formulating their reasons for the belief, that Ninety-Eight, like Forty-Eight, will be one of those years in which events occur in battalions.”

As the weeks and months passed away, St. Loe’s little notebook, in which he always pencilled his ideas for the next week’s paper, became blacker and blacker long before he got to 1, Wellington Street on a Tuesday morning. America was fighting the Spaniards in Cuba, and there were crises of one sort and another in France, China and India, while quite early in January a threatened attack on Berber by the Khalifa sent the British troops streaming out of Cairo. The first detachment was led by my brother, Major (now General) Charles Simpson of the Lincolnshire Regiment, of whose efficiency as an officer we heard much the following autumn in Cairo. This Egyptian advance, together with the Fashoda incident, was intimately bound up with our journey, and these events must be briefly chronicled.

The situation as to the irrigation of Egypt was so dependent on our possession of the Upper Nile that the Government had most politely intimated to the French, some time before, that we proposed to keep the Upper Valley of the Nile in our own hands. However, in January there were rumours that the French had occupied Fashoda—a place on the White Nile considerably above Khartoum, but below the junction of the Bahr-el-Ghazal with the main stream.

In April, just at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, Kitchener defeated the forces of the Khalifa at the Battle of Atbara, the comment of the *Spectator* being, "It is quite clear that we have got another General and of the first class."

In August we heard of the desperate illness of Lady Cromer in Scotland. At the end of August the Battle of Omdurman resulted in the taking of Khartoum, and Lord Cromer wrote a private letter to St. Loe to tell him that Kitchener was half way to Fashoda. It was obvious that Lord Cromer's place was in Egypt. With dauntless courage Lady Cromer determined to undertake the voyage, knowing full well that Lord Cromer would not leave her.

As soon as Omdurman was fought and we knew that my brother and our friends were safe, we made final arrangements for our tour in Palestine. We travelled from Marseilles to Port Said in the same P. and O. as Lord Cromer and his party, meeting his niece, Miss Nina Baring, on the land journey from Calais. Fortunately, the Mediterranean was extremely calm, for any storm in her then condition would have been fatal to Lady Cromer. One cannot bear to think of Lord Cromer's feelings on that voyage, but I think St. Loe's presence was a certain comfort to him. They could, at any rate, absorb themselves in politics. Indeed, Lord Cromer always possessed that detachment of mind without which human nature could never attain to greatness. We sat at the Captain's table with Lord Cromer, Miss Baring, and a lady who was journeying to Shanghai to join her husband. She, poor thing, was so embarrassed by the presence of the great man that when he asked her a question she always replied to St. Loe or me. She was made to talk a good deal,

for she had a command of pidgin English which amused us all. I wrote to Tommy :

“ We tell Lord Cromer he listens so eagerly to this, he must intend to write a report about the Sirdar in pidgin English, which will begin, ‘ One piecie large man, same as joss man.’ ”

Lord Cromer and his party disembarked at Port Said and we were all terribly anxious as to the possibility of Lady Cromer surviving the rail journey. As soon as possible he sent us a line to tell us of their safe arrival in Cairo.

After visiting Jerusalem, we, more fortunate than the tourist of to-day who goes about in landaus, mounted our horses for a long ride and camp from Jerusalem to Damascus. I have a full record of this in the letters of that day, but have only space here to record a singular incident which happened at Damascus. Arrived at that city, to our great surprise Selim Moussa, our dragoman, told us that no houses were to be seen. This was in such direct contradiction to the guide-book, which said that travellers were allowed inside several of the big houses, particularly that called Beit Addan, that we felt the dragoman was mistaken. We accordingly consulted Mr. Richards, the British Consul, whose kindness and hospitality made our stay delightful. We had especially asked Selim about the Beit Addan, and he had said, “ There is nothing to see there.” I wrote home that we reported this to the Consul.

“ ‘ It is difficult,’ he said, ‘ to get in, but it is the best house in Damascus. It is seldom shown now and there is a

tragedy connected with it. One of the daughters was married to Izzit Bey, at Constantinople, and the next morning he divorced her. Her family is one of the oldest in Syria and this was a dreadful disgrace. She was sent home. Just at this time Cornelius Vanderbilt was at Damascus and he and his party went to see Beit Addan. The women of the harem, hearing Vanderbilt was the richest man in the world, all crowded down to try and peep at him, and the wretched girl, left alone, hanged herself. Since then it has been very seldom shown.'

" 'Why,' said we, 'our dragoman Selim Moussa was with Vanderbilt and must have been there. That's why he says there's nothing to see.' The Consul said we must not take Selim, who certainly would not be let in, and the end of it was he and Mrs. Richards took us themselves with their Kawas."

Before leaving Damascus, we talked over a plan of our helping to smuggle an Armenian refugee out of the country as my maid, but nothing came of it.

Our whole journey had been saddened by the news of Lady Cromer's death, and later, I think at Beyrout, we heard of the Fashoda incident. It was perhaps the first time that I heard St. Loe use the phrase which became so familiar to me on every journey we took together afterwards, "I wish I were at home to deal with that!"

Our last Eastern voyage was a grand tour we undertook in the year 1900 to Vienna, Constantinople and Cairo, where Lord Cromer had asked us to stay and we had planned a camp in the oasis of the Fayoum, which St. Loe had always wanted to see. St. Loe talked to all the interesting people in Constantinople, and wrote to his father as follows :

“There never was such a city as this. It is vast (1,000,000 people) and rich and thronged with soldiers. Ever since it began it has been a kept city, feeding on the tribute of provinces under the sway of the Emperors living in it. There is no common feeling in the city. There are Greeks and Turks and Armenians (almost as many Armenians as Turks) and Jews and plenty of other people and they all hate each other like poison. It is like a nightmare and above it all sits the Sultan shivering with fear of assassination and yet controlling everything.”

I sent home a long account of the Selamlik, which I omit, as it has been so frequently described. Less well known are the following stories of Abdul Hamid, which were told us by an English official.

“The Sultan asked one of his Ministers what he thought of him, and on the Minister replying with the usual Eastern compliment, the Sultan said, ‘Oh no, you are quite wrong. What I am really is a criminal under sentence of death. The question is when the execution is to take place. It may be ten years hence, it may be tomorrow, who knows? But it must come.’ Another fine yarn was of a French lady journalist who was very anxious to get into Yildiz. At that time there was a French troupe of Opéra Comique in Constantinople which had performed to the Sultan two or three times and was to go again. So the journalist lady bribed the Manager to let her go on as one of the chorus. The curtain drew up to show the chorus grouped on the stage. ‘Who is that?’ cried the Sultan, pointing to the lady journalist. ‘She is new. I have not seen her before.’ Down came the curtain, the performance was stopped, the whole troupe

interrogated and the lady journalist kept for six hours under lock and key before they would let her go."

From Constantinople we went to Athens for a few days, and as a tribute to the great affection which little Amabel, then aged eight, had developed for the fairy scenes of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I wrote to her :

"I have not seen Puck, and all the woods have been cut down—but still there are beautiful brown hills left and a wide stretch of blue sea in the distance. The air is very soft and clear and everything looks beautiful. Especially the ruins of Athene's temple, which stands proudly up on a hill nearly as high as Newlands and looks over the town. It was all built of beautiful gleaming white marble, and inside where the wind and the rain could not come, the marble is still like snow ; outside the sun has kissed it so often that some of the sunlight has stayed on the stone and it looks a beautiful deep orange colour."

After a three days' stay in Athens we embarked in what I think was an Egyptian steamer from the Piræus to Alexandria, where Lord Cromer had sent to meet us, and for once we experienced the comfort of travelling like crowned heads. Needless to say, we had a most interesting time at the Agency. Lord Cromer had very kindly put off his annual visits to the antiquities, mosques, etc., till we could go with him. Every afternoon we started off on some delightful expedition, and, knowing Lord Cromer's love of punctuality, I am not ashamed to admit that ten minutes before the start was due St. Loe and I always came down and hid behind the pillars in the hall, emerging with great *sang-froid* just as "the Lord," as everybody called him, walked in with his hat on. He was much too busy a man to be kept waiting, and I remember

his saying on several occasions that we were the three most punctual people in Cairo. Great was his mirth when we told him that we were going to start our journey to the Fayoum by camping at the foot of the Pyramid. "You might as well camp on Clapham Common!" he said. But there was no moon, and at sunset the guides and the photographers all departed and left the world to darkness and to us. I remember the eeriness of lying in a tent at the foot of the Great Pyramid and hearing mysterious cries and the noises of the jackals all night scrambling up and down the great monuments.

After our camp in the Fayoum we took the train to Luxor, and there found Mr. Howard Carter digging. Lord Cromer had asked him to take us to the Tomb of Amenhotep II., which was not yet open to the public. So much has since been written of the tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen that I omit the letters in which we described the tombs.

Early in December we returned to the Agency, and Lord Cromer wrote to Tommy on December 7th :

"MY DEAR TOMMY,—I am sending you home Father and Mother by this mail. I shall be very sorry to lose them. They seem to have enjoyed themselves very much, but Mother constantly wanted to know when the letters arrived from England. I can't imagine why !

"You will see that there are to be a lot more batteries of artillery added to the army. I hope we shall get the right sort of gun this time.

"I am going to Khartoum in a few days.

"A very happy Christmas to you and Amabel.

"Aff.

"CROMER."

CHAPTER VIII

THE TALENT OF SUCCESS

In *The Adventure of Living* St. Loe has given so full an account of his editorship of the *Cornhill* and of the zest which he brought to the task that I think little remains to be said about it.

His tenure of office was short, the three volumes of the *Cornhill* for which he was responsible dating from July 1896 to December 1897. These volumes even now contain excellent reading, and St. Loe's editorship fully justified the aspiration with which Mr. George Smith was credited—"I want the *Cornhill* to be talked about once more at London dinner-parties." The story was probably apocryphal, but undoubtedly the ingenious new features of the magazine were much discussed in literary circles. To the end of his life St. Loe considered his introduction to the world of Mr. Walter de la Mare, whose first story he published, as one of the most interesting literary discoveries he had made.

Following on the death of Lord Tennyson in 1896 came a tremendous struggle over the Laureateship. The *Spectator* advocated the appointment of William Watson, but to the surprise of everyone Mr. Alfred Austin was chosen. The event was signalised by a delightful book by Mr. Owen Seaman called *The Battle of the Bays*. This—reminiscent of the *Rejected Addresses* of an earlier generation—gave a series of nine poems purporting to be written by the poets

of the day. The contribution called *Elegi Musarum* was labelled "After W. W." (William Watson) and dedicated to St. Loe.

*His, I repeat, is the anguish—my journalist, eulogist critic,
Strachey, the generous judge, saintly unlimited Loe !*

*Vainly the stolid Spectator, bewildered with fabulous bow-wows,
Sick with a surfeit of dog, ran me for all it was worth !*

.

*Vainly, O excellent organ ! with ample and aqueous unction
Once, as a rule, in a week, "cleansing the Earth of her stain" ;*

.

*Vainly your voice on the ears of impregnable Laureate-makers,
Rang as the sinuous sea rings on a petrified coast.*

As will be seen, these excellent elegiacs brought down, with neat shots to right and left, the poet and the Editor with his journal. They were greatly enjoyed by us all, but "saintly unlimited Loe" must have puzzled those readers who thought the name was pronounced "Low," instead of as if it were indeed spelt like the game—"Loo."

The end of the *Cornhill* editorship came in 1897. We had been going on a jaunt abroad, and the children were to go to my mother at Millmead, while the Charles Booths had taken Newlands for several weeks. But the whooping-cough intervened, and Tommy began to cough his head off in the spare bed-room. We were, of course, obliged to ask the Booths to let us off the bargain, and later, to recuperate our coughing offspring, we determined to take them in June to the French seaside. With infinite courage, St. Loe and I, Tommy, little Amabel, then three years

old, and a Swiss nurse landed at Havre one sunny morning without an idea where we were to sleep. A secondary steamer took us to Honfleur, whence a very slow fly conducted us along the coast till we came to Villerville-sur-Mer, and there we cast anchor. We had charming, clean rooms—the whole second floor of the tiny Hotel Continental—and the sight is with me now of little Amabel dancing along with her father on one side and me on the other, trying to take both feet off the ground together because the crabs pinched her toes. It was a golden time, but was to be rudely interrupted by a thunderbolt from Wellington Street saying that the health of Mr. Hutton, who very shortly before had lost his wife, had failed and that he proposed to retire immediately. 1897 was the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, and we had at great expense taken tickets on a steamer going to the Naval Review. After consultation, we determined that we would go off to that, leaving the children with their *bonne* at Villerville, and that after the Review St. Loe should go straight to London, while I came back and rescued the family.

Mr. Hutton died on September 9th, and Mr. Townsend wrote the following note in the *Spectator* :

“ His colleagues are forbidden by pledges which they cannot break, either to write a memoir of him, or, within the range of their influence, to permit anyone else to do so.”

Mr. William Watson wrote to St. Loe just before Mr. Hutton's death :

“ This is indeed sad news that you send me about our beloved Hutton, the greatest spirit I have ever known.”

I think even Mr. Hutton, with his dread of post-mortem comment, would not have objected to my paying a tribute to his kindness to children. I saw very little of him, as St. Loe's constant intercourse with him was mostly at the office ; but I well remember a lunch in Cornwall Gardens, to which he came mostly for the purpose of meeting Tommy, and to which he brought Lear's *Book of Nonsense*, inscribed, " Thomas Clive Strachey 26th March 1896." He quoted at lunch with infinite gusto :

*There was an Old Man of Vienna,
Who lived upon tincture of senna :
When that did not agree,
He took camomile tea,
That nasty Old Man of Vienna.*

I am sure he would have been glad to know that thirty years afterwards Tommy's nephew and nieces are so fond of the book that I have had a tremendous hunt through this whole house to find it and verify the date.

An avalanche of work succeeded Hutton's death. It became almost immediately evident that the *Cornhill* would have to be given up ; but I think St. Loe edited the last three numbers in 1897, the contents of which were practically settled before September. I know that on one occasion the pressure was so great that I had to do the " make-up "—a matter in which I had a great training in the early days of the *Liberal Unionist*. I can still see myself on the original big chesterfield sofa surrounded by proofs and trying desperately, as usual, to get a quart into a pint pot.

The financial question was, of course, a little difficult. St. Loe was to buy Mr. Hutton's half of the paper, and, as we had no capital, loans had to be arranged. Hardly was the scheme for this made out when another bomb-shell

burst upon the family in the shape of tentative negotiations by Mr. Alfred Harmsworth to buy the whole paper. There was a long interview between St. Loe and Mr. Harmsworth, from which they both emerged absolutely shattered. There is an envelope of little notes by Mr. Harmsworth marked in St. Loe's handwriting "Harmsworth" and included in a bigger envelope marked "Biographical Matter," and I conclude from this that if he had written a sequel to *The Adventure of Living*, he would have used it. The cash figures, however, are too vague to be quoted by anyone who is in ignorance of the negotiations. The whole thing went off on the question of repayment for the replacing of Mr. Townsend's writing, for he wanted to retire. Mr. Harmsworth wished a capital sum representing the value of this payment to be deducted from the price paid by him, and St. Loe and Mr. Townsend would not listen to this. I never saw anyone so relieved as St. Loe. Mr. Harmsworth's letter suggesting that the capital value of the, approximately, £700 worth of work done by Mr. Townsend should be deducted from the price paid is not available, but a copy in my writing of my husband's answer is before me. In those days there was a Sunday post, and Mr. Harmsworth's letter came one sunny Sunday morning. I confess to having been extremely sorry. It was the sort of security which I think no mother with a growing family could have resigned without a pang, for I remember that St. Loe's income was to be about £4,700 a year. But *he* was delighted. Although he had laid down in the strictest manner that for five years he was to be secured a complete editorial and political dictatorship, he knew perfectly well, from reading the *Daily Mail*, that he would not be free in spirit as well as free in law. Mr. Harmsworth wrote him a

charming letter on the failure of negotiations, expressing his hope that the two negotiators would often have an opportunity in the future for an exchange of ideas on political matters, and ending by saying how much it had cheered him to find that the "directing mind" of the *Spectator* was so alive to Anglo-Saxon destinies.

Remained Mr. Townsend, who, naturally enough, was as disappointed as I; and he was not nearly as much consoled as I was by seeing what a relief the failure of negotiations had been to St. Loe. After many parleyings it was finally settled that more money was to be borrowed and St. Loe was to become sole Proprietor and Editor, Mr. Townsend remaining as an invaluable contributor.

And here I am going deliberately to break my rule of not speaking of the living, and to say with what a matter of course naturalness St. Loe's brother Harry twice within a year put the whole of his resources at St. Loe's disposal. To avoid death duties, Sir Edward Strachey had before this given his younger children their portions, and this, his whole livelihood, was what Harry twice risked. It would be an absolute under-statement to say that St. Loe never forgot it. In the anxious days after the War it was never out of his thoughts, and, though we all know that St. Loe would have done the same thing for Harry, yet the fact remains that it was Harry who did it. I am quite conscious that in writing this I am being exceedingly indiscreet, but the world is all the better for being told of such instances of selfless devotion.

His undying opposition to Home Rule always gave St. Loe, and thus the *Spectator*, cause for uneasiness. In the spring of 1899 I remember his meeting Lady Gregory at dinner. She told him many delightful stories, and scribbled the following poem on his menu :

“ *And what happened all the rint ?* ”

Says the Shan van Vogh,

“ *Ah—none knows but them that spint
All the curious ways that wint,* ”

Says the Shan van Vogh.

“ *And will he lose the city ?* ”

“ Says the Shan van Vogh.

“ *Oh, he will and more’s the pity,
With his illigant committee
And his priests with their banditti,* ”
Says the Shan van Vogh.

A delightful story about Archbishop Walsh (probably invented) was also current at that time. He was asked whether, if a Home Rule Bill merely wanted his signature to pass into law, he would sign. The Archbishop, it is said, walked up and down in some perturbation, but at last rapped out, “ Yes, I would ; I would ; and I would pray to Almighty God to save the country ! ”

In April 1899 the *Daily Mail* published an article on St. Loe and his direction of the *Spectator*. With its extraordinarily felicitous and impartial view of the *Spectator* I have no room to deal ; but its description of St. Loe is illuminating. The first paragraph is headed “ The Talent of Success,” and concludes, after a description of the *Spectator*, “ Such is the paper which Mr. Strachey directs, and if he personifies the *Spectator*, it is from the *Spectator* that we may get the best measure of his talent.” “ No Trace of the Inkpot ” heads the second paragraph, which continues :

“ Born in 1860, Mr. Strachey, who is one of the great Anglo-Indian Stracheys, is still ” [1899] “ a young man. He belongs rather to the new than to the dying century ;

yet his strength is the strength of maturity. Educated at Balliol, and distinguished in modern history, like so many others who are doing admirable work in the world, he early embraced the profession of letters, and may already boast an experience of fifteen years."

Turning to "Independent Liberalism," the article goes on:

"The watchword of the *Spectator*—'Independent Liberalism'—exactly fits its latest editor. Mr. Strachey is liberal in the sense that he is ready to examine new policies or fresh enterprises. . . . He has proved on the *Spectator*, as he proved some years since on the *Cornhill*, that he has the editor's true flair."

And there followed this curious comment on the limitations of papers with vast circulations, of which the *Daily Mail* was one of the first exemplars:

"But Mr. Strachey and the *Spectator* serve a small public, whose demands it is not irksome to obey, and so they have been able to defy the shocks of change and chance. . . . They have been able to remain themselves because they are sure of their public."

Continuing as to the mechanical work:

"The pages are now presented to the reader cut and sewn, and there is no need to struggle with a paper-knife."

It had been the leisurely practice of the paper for the printer to send it in sheets to No. 1, Wellington Street, where a company of old charladies, seated chiefly on the stairs, folded it, but did not stitch it. Two consequences ensued: (*a*) that, as soon as the paper was cut, the pages fell to pieces and strewed the floor, and (*b*) that the cutting process had to take place at the bottom of the page as well as the top, which, as a friend once said to me,

made the paper unfit for circulation except amongst people who kept butlers who were ready to cut, iron and stitch it. The passion of resentment from the old gentlemen in the country which followed this very simple reform will hardly be believed. The office, too, deeply stamped with Conservatism, presented an unbroken opposition.

The *Daily Mail's* tribute concludes :

“Nor in bowing the knee to the time-honoured tradition has Mr. Strachey effaced himself. He is but giving a fuller expression to his natural talent, for he was born to edit the *Spectator*, and he is one of the few men of his generation who has, without doubt or hesitancy, fulfilled his destiny.”

Another and more sinister menace to St. Loe's political peace happened about this time. In the winter of 1898-9 Mr. Chamberlain came to a small, quiet dinner at 14, Cornwall Gardens, and there shadowed forth his policy of Imperial Preference. It was the first note of the storm that was to wreck St. Loe's political career. I remember Mr. Chamberlain saying in effect (I do not remember the words textually), “I don't say that I shall ever carry out this policy, but I do say that any statesman who carried it out would sweep the country.” Subsequently Mr. Chamberlain wrote to St. Loe saying that he was ready to admit one qualification in his Free Trade orthodoxy, and comparing the fanatical Free-Trader to the fanatical peace-at-any-price man. He further stated that, as it was occasionally necessary to risk war in order to preserve peace, it might be necessary to threaten retaliation in order to secure the development of Free Trade. It was the rift within the lute. Neither Mr. Chamberlain's Free Trade orthodoxy nor his friendship with St. Loe were destined to survive the Boer War.

CHAPTER IX

THE LATE NINETIES

In spite of debts on capital, the paper was going so well that in the winter of 1899 we made inquiries from Harrods as to hiring a carriage ; but, walking down the Marylebone Road, we saw an advertisement, " Motor Cars for Hire." " This is much better," said we, and we promptly went in and found that we could hire a motor, chauffeur and all, for the incredibly small sum of seven guineas a week. The negotiations were rapidly concluded, and we took a tentative drive in the Park. Full of my new toy, the next day I invited a great friend, Mrs. Norman Lampson, to come for a drive into the suburbs, and we set off as grand as possible down the Finchley Road. The body of the car was very ingenious. It was shaped exactly like a victoria, and a large catafalque, rather like the *felza* of a gondola, could be let down in the winter. I was much too cautious to be enclosed in anything so experimental as a motor, and we used the car as a victoria. The engine was about 8 h.p., and we thought ourselves very dashing as we proceeded at about twelve miles an hour ! There was no magneto ignition, and the power was supplied by lamps situated at the back. In the middle of the Finchley Road, Lennox, our driver (he became our own chauffeur and we had him for some years) drew suddenly up to the sidewalk and said something had gone wrong. He invited us to get out, and immediately clouds of steam rose from

under the seat on which we had been sitting and enveloped the Finchley Road ! It was a little embarrassing, as an extremely large crowd collected. However, in the end things were suitably adjusted and we got home safely.

The next thing was to motor down to Newlands. There is a certain horse-trough just outside Kingston which I never pass without remembering my disgust when on that first journey we had to draw up to fill the water-tank.

Having accomplished Newlands, we thought we would try going all the way to Sutton Court for a *Spectator* weekend—i.e. Friday evening to Tuesday. St. Loe could not get away very early on a Friday, so it was necessary to sleep at Newbury. We went down extremely successfully, and great was the excitement as this very modern vehicle passed through the archway of the battlemented wall. I cannot remember that we used the car at Sutton Court, but I know that we returned to London on the Monday morning. It was a cold morning and there was a little bustle in getting the bags, etc., down, and we all resolved that Sir Edward should not be allowed to come to the door to see us off lest he should catch cold. But where was Sir Edward ? After a fruitless search through the rooms we found him with a brown wool antimacassar over his head peering into the mechanism of the car, with Lennox volubly answering his very intelligent questions. I shall never forget the high west wind which blew us back to London. " Gives us an extra horse-power," said Lennox. It did, but it also at frequent intervals blew out the lamps, and St. Loe at the top of every hill had to get out and solemnly re-light them.

A year or two before this we had made acquaintance with one of the most remarkable women of the day—Miss Mary Kingsley, the West African traveller. Her interest in

and knowledge of the native tribes down the West Coast will, I should think, still be remembered by all interested in the problems of West Africa. Slender, upright, carrying her body with a curious stiffness, she looked, with her blue eyes, humorous mouth, and fair hair parted in the middle under a black velvet snood, less like an explorer than anyone I ever saw. Yet she had visited unknown cannibal tribes and undertaken the ascent of great mountains with no European companions. She had a brain masculine in its strength and in the breadth of its outlook, but she had also an unequalled sense of humour and was quite the most amusing person I ever met. While, of course, her main object was to bring her views to the notice of the *Spectator*, she yet found time for a very warm friendship with me, and great was the fun we had together. I cannot recall when we first got to know her ; but in January '97 she wrote a friendly letter to St. Loe commenting on his review in the *Spectator* of her *West African Studies* and chaffing him on his comment. "What strikes us most is the absence of all connection between virtue and a devotion to religion." In this she explained that in her "foggy way" she had not meant to speak of a connection between virtue and religion and that the connection was between virtue and fear. "Take away fear—and your African is off down his primrose path." Miss Kingsley was always emphatic on the disastrous effects of the separating of fear from religion. I have very often heard her say that when she was coming down the coast and heard the hymn, "A little talk with Jesus puts it right, all right," she always expected the worst. She had lived since the death of her father, Dr. George Kingsley, the youngest brother of Charles Kingsley, with her brother at 32, St. Mary Abbott's Terrace, Kensington.

Many a pilgrimage have I made to her funny little house there with its two chimneys, christened by her "Chimbarazo" and "Valparaiso" because they alternately vomited dense clouds of smoke into her rooms. Directly the front-door was opened the smell of Ju-Ju idols rushed at the arriving guest. There was one idol in particular covered with dried blood, into which nails had been stuck by those who wished to devote their enemies to destruction. I confess that I should not at all have liked to spend a night alone in a room with that idol. In an undated letter to his father of about that time St. Loe gives the following account of her description of an appeal to Long Ju-Ju:

"We had a party here last night and Miss Kingsley was with us and told us some very splendid travellers' tales. Remind me to tell you the story of how she went to Long Ju Ju—an awful mysterious lake of slime in a, blasted forest, i.e. a forest of trees all dead and withered. When she got to the lake, she and her company were made to sit down with their backs to the lake. Presently to them enter two priests painted all white. The priests bandaged her eyes and the eyes of her people and then by a secret ford known only to [them] they passed the lake of slime wading waist high. When the bandages were removed, they found themselves in an island in the middle of the Lake. That island has in it another little lake and running out into the little lake is an old trunk of a tree. That is Long Ju-Ju. It is a secret priestly ordeal. You are thrown into the little lake. If innocent you rise. If guilty you never rise again, but from under the water your blood bubbles up. No one knows how it is done. Anywhere on the West Coast you may always appeal to Long Ju-Ju, after you have been condemned to death. But not all people do this,

because if you fail at Long Ju-Ju you are lost for ever. But more of Long Ju-Ju when we meet."

Soon afterwards Mary Kingsley expressed a wish to meet Mr. Frank Bullen, an author whom St. Loe had "discovered" in the *Cornhill*, who wrote more poetically and romantically of the sperm whale fishery than anyone since the publication by Herman Melville of *Moby Dick*. In February 1899, we gave a small dinner-party to which Mr. Balfour came to meet both Mary Kingsley and Frank Bullen. After dinner Mary Kingsley told him horrible stories of people in West Africa who accidentally crossed the trail of the travelling white ants and were absolutely overwhelmed and their eyes eaten out in about five minutes. I can see Mr. Balfour shudder now ! Mr. Bullen's antistrophe of the detestable habits of the sperm whale when you went after him with a harpoon, did not alarm him nearly so much.

Some time during the nineties a great dinner-party was given by the intelligentzia among the women of London, in which each woman acted as hostess to one distinguished man. Rumour said that Sir Alfred Lyall received seventeen invitations. I cannot remember who St. Loe's hostess was, but I know he went. Just before the dinner came off, Mary Kingsley wrote me a delightful letter in which she said she had attended a committee of the hostesses which was called to decide upon the incidental music which should be played during the dinner. She had wished to propose the immortal ditty of "The Cat's Meat Man," which she proceeded to quote :

"If I'd a five-pound note," said the cat's meat man,
"I'd marry you to-morrow," said the cat's meat man.
She expressed her admiration of his admirable plan ;
She gave a five-pound note to the cat's meat man !

But, though our friendship with Mary Kingsley was illuminated by the humorous medium through which she saw life, her correspondence with St. Loe was on the principles of government in tropical countries, with comments on the Hut Tax and kindred subjects. Of these she writes in August 1897 :

“ I know these people ” [she means the Home Government] “ have not got the sense or rather have not got the political courage to make a radical change in the fiscal system. They can only put on a ‘ hut ’ tax and fight for it and Western Africa will run blood and breed ruin and people up here will call it the White Man’s Burden and kiss the chains they have bound themselves with and publicly canonise themselves as Saints for fighting against ‘ Slavery ’ or ‘ Barbarism.’ There is a white man’s burden, I own, but it is merely a form of softening of this white brain—or atrophy of the white brain from using maxims and maxim-guns—instead of thinking. It is a serious affair for to-morrow. After all, tropical Africa is not everything to England. There is China—the time will come when we shall, if we wish to remain an Eastern Power, have to throw our money and our energy that way. This will necessarily drain our African energy, and the Africans by that time cordially hating us, armed and drilled by us, will rise against us whenever we are weak and will be an open sore. Portugal bled to death in her colonies. We shall not do that, but we shall be none the stronger or the better fitted to fight this great fight we have before us by having a nasty painful ulcer, and the amount of money that will be collected by hut taxing will not recompense us for the amount of money it directly or indirectly will cost us. Of course I cannot prove this, but when it proves

itself, remember I was wise before the event, and I shall always remember what I owe to you for giving me the feeling that it was worth my while, when I went into the fight, to keep to the rules of the game and not to go bally-wagging any white gentlemen's private character—or howling over 'those poor dear child-like Blacks.' ”

Both she and St. Loe were at one in their dislike of Chartered Companies. She tells him that she is sick of hearing people say “there is nothing for undeveloped regions but Chartered Companies or the brown colony system.” “God help us if there isn't,” she says, “for it means a smash in the tropics.”

One peculiarity of Mary Kingsley which endeared her to her friends was that she could not pronounce the letter H. This had the drollest effect when she was talking high politics. It added, however, greatly to the pleasure of the wonderful stories she told. There was one regarding a love affair, which began with a girl at a tea-party exclaiming, “Oh, Miss Kingsley, 'Arry's on the roof!” To this resort had an unauthorised lover been driven by the unexpected return of the young lady's parents, and the father, in consequence of a shower of rain, had unwittingly shut the skylight behind him. Miss Kingsley went to the rescue, sticking her head through the aperture and calling out, “'Arry, I see you 'iding among the chimney-pots!” After which 'Arry, boots in hand, crept down-stairs and sneaked out of the front-door while Miss Kingsley kept *cave*.

Late in the summer of 1899 Lord Cromer, who was going to stay with Mr. and Mrs. Lionel Bulteel at The Rookery, Dorking, on Saturday, September 23rd, wrote to St. Loe that he would dine and sleep at Newlands on

the Friday, and asked that a conveyance should be obtained for him to drive over to Dorking on the Saturday. "I shall be delighted," he says, "if I am fortunate enough to meet Miss Kingsley." The little house at that moment was being enlarged, and how we accommodated even one guest I cannot remember. We accordingly only asked Miss Kingsley to come over for the day, and on the Saturday morning I received with great regret a line from her saying that she could not manage it. About half-past ten, however, looking out of the window, I perceived the baker's cart trundling up the drive with a strange figure seated beside the baker. This was Miss Kingsley, sitting up very stiff in her little black bonnet, and conveying somehow the impression of the figure-head of a ship. A most interesting afternoon followed. Lord Cromer afterwards said that he had never met a woman who impressed him so much as having the mind of a statesman, and Miss Kingsley wrote next day :

"I am very grateful to you for the honour and pleasure you gave me yesterday by showing me the big Ju-Ju of administration. I most sincerely wish no one were sent out as administrator in our dominions unless they could show a certificate signed by Cromer. It would be a short and easy solution of our present messy state in the tropics."

CHAPTER X

THE BOER WAR

On the morning of Thursday, January 2nd, 1896, St. Loe looked up from his *Times* with great excitement and said, "They've done it, and I'm not sure that it isn't a very good thing that they did." So cryptically did he tell me of the Jameson Raid. He thought the Raid justified by the hardships suffered by the Uitlanders—as the Englishmen in the Transvaal were called—but he very quickly saw that it had made things a great deal worse instead of better. As everyone knows, the Raid failed, and the excitement of the next week was the German Emperor's telegram to President Kruger, which ran as follows: "I express to you my sincere congratulations that without appealing to the help of friendly Powers you and your people have succeeded in repelling with your own forces the armed bands which had broken into your country and in maintaining the independence of your country against foreign aggression." The *Spectator's* comment was: "This is, of course, a recognition of the independence of the Transvaal, which, as the Emperor well knew, the British Government deny." It has always seemed to me that that was the day on which the foundation-stone of the Great War of 1914 was laid. A flying squadron of ships was quickly organised by Mr. Chamberlain, who was then at the Colonial Office, and the excitement which the whole affair generated in England remained unallayed

till three years later when the Boer War broke out. St. Loe had a long correspondence on the subject with Miss Flora Shaw, later Lady Lugard, who was then on the Staff of *The Times*. This unfortunately has been lost, but I remember well that they did not see eye to eye on the subject.

In the third week of February 1897 we were dining with Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain. It was a young people's party, and I was sitting next my host. A telegram was brought in to him, and when he had read it he turned to me and said, "This is the Queen's sanction. I can now announce that Sir Alfred Milner is to be the new High Commissioner of South Africa." The situation which Sir Alfred was to find when he landed in May was indeed involved. Mr. Rhodes, while expressing his sympathies with the Uitlanders' grievances, had declined all responsibility for the Raid. Yet the Volksraad of South Africa had passed legislation which Mr. Chamberlain stigmatised as contrary to the Convention of London. "If," he said in a debate on the appointment of the South African Committee, "that legislation is enforced, undoubtedly a situation will be created which will require all our prudence, all our impartiality, and all our patience." (*Spectator*, February 6th.) The findings in May of this body were considered profoundly unsatisfactory, and an enormous sensation was produced in our circles by Miss Flora Shaw's evidence and the distinction which she drew between the Jameson plan and the Jameson Raid. "The Jameson plan," said the *Spectator* (May 20th), "of which she approved and to which she was virtually privy, was to have a force on the border ready to take action, if and when the Revolution took place at Johannesburg."

In the following year, 1898, the feeling between the

Transvaal and England was increased by the murder of a certain Mr. Edgar, which was allowed to go unpunished.

In the early spring of '99 we resolved that in the autumn we would go to America, and booked our tickets for October 7th in the *Lucania*. We were by no means certain that we should be able to leave England, for St. Loe wrote to Mr. Hay (Secretary of State) in July as follows :

“The Transvaal question is disturbing our minds a great deal. You will have seen how I regard it from the *Spectator*, but at the same time I feel that war would be a great evil. I have often wished I could talk about it to you and so gain the advice of a sane and liberal mind, which is also by the nature of the case in a position of impartiality. You helped to make the South feel that she could not be allowed to do what she would with her own and I should like to know whether you think it is fair and right, as I think that it is, to say to Kruger that he must do *justice* and not what he will with his own.”

Already, before he wrote this, the Bloemfontein Conference had broken down, but as late as September 9th Lord Cromer adds in a postscript to a letter to me, “I still have a faint hope that Kruger may give in at the last moment.” A month later, on October 9th, came the Boer ultimatum. Of course, we had already put off our visit to America, and St. Loe gave up every thought of a holiday. Early in November Lord Cromer wrote him much wise advice, in which he told him that he must manage to get a holiday, however short, stating that he attributed his own good health to the advice of his doctor, Sir H. H., when he was a young man to insist on taking a complete change of air, scene and surroundings for a short

time every year. "Please read this admirable advice to Mrs. Strachey," he wrote. "I know she will agree." Backed by this powerful ally, I insisted on a short change, but I could get St. Loe no further than Holland, which, though interesting, was not, considering that the War had broken out, exactly a change of idea, though the Galleries provided a little peace. We got back on October 25th, and I wrote to my mother: "St. Loe is, I am sure, quite pleased to get back to a place where he can buy six *extra* newspapers a day. How thankful I am he is not raging in America—paperless!"

General White was sent out as Commander-in-Chief in Natal, with General French (afterwards Lord Ypres) serving under him. Sir Redvers Buller was in supreme command. No special forces were enrolled, but the Reserves were called up.

Those who remember that time know that the opening days saw a series of British defeats, including the disaster at Nicholson's Nek, when nine hundred British soldiers were sent as prisoners to Pretoria. These preliminary defeats ended in the shutting up of General White in Ladysmith and Colonel Baden-Powell at Mafeking.

Everything seemed admirably arranged. The War was to be over by Christmas, and was, of course, only to be a skirmish. But, as in the following spring a N.C.O. of the Guards said to us with a sigh, "It did seem 'ard on the men to 'ave to pursue mounted men on foot." It was asking too much, and towards the end of December the news got worse and worse. Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, the South African statesman, was in England at the time, and on Friday, December 15th, we persuaded Mr. Balfour to come to dine quietly with us to meet him and hearten him up about military affairs generally. My great friend Mrs.

Lampson was invited to keep me company. The dinner passed off well, although we were very anxious, for it was the moment at which Sir Redvers Buller was known to be attempting to cross the Tugela. Mrs. Lampson and I went upstairs to the drawing-room, leaving the three men to talk matters over, and St. Loe told me afterwards that in about ten minutes the butler came in and said, "A message from the War Office for Mr. Balfour."—"I'm afraid that's bad news," said Mr. Balfour. The dispatch contained the news of the battle of Colenso and an urgent summons to Mr. Balfour to join Lord Lansdowne at the War Office. They all three came upstairs, and nothing could be imagined so good, so sane, and so encouraging as Mr. Balfour's words to Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, who for the moment was utterly discouraged. After Mr. Balfour had left, Sir Percy spoke of the English military supremacy being a pricked bubble, but before he went away St. Loe's reasoned optimism had to a certain extent restored his courage.

The history of those days is so unknown to the modern generation that I quote from the *Spectator* of December 23rd, 1899, the following description of what the battle of Colenso really meant.

"On Friday, December 15th, in the early morning, General Buller moved out of his camp at Chieveley to attempt the crossing of the Tugela River at Colenso. After eight hours' fighting, he failed to drive the enemy out of their strong positions, and though some of his troops actually crossed, he had ultimately to retire with the loss of eleven guns, ten of which were abandoned and one destroyed by shell-fire, and with over a thousand casualties in killed, wounded and prisoners. The guns

were lost owing to their being brought too near the course of the river, where a large number of Boer marksmen lay concealed."

The paragraph goes on :

"No doubt General Buller's failure to force the passage of the river is a disagreeable incident, but to speak of it as a great disaster is a most gross exaggeration."

Nevertheless, the country staggered from the unexpected blow, though, with the well-known quality of the Englishman, who never fights so well as when he has got his back to the wall, the reaction was immediate and most gallantly undertaken. Lord Roberts was sent out to take supreme command. He had a private cause of sorrow, for his only son had been lost in the battle, but rumour said that when told that he was wanted, he answered that he was seventy years old, but that he had lived a hard life, drunk little, was fit, and would answer the call of his country. Lord Kitchener was made Chief of the Staff. Sir Redvers Buller was not superseded, but, to quote again from the *Spectator*, he was left "to work out the Natal campaign unimpeded by the need of having to superintend other campaigns." The Navy was mobilised. A special Territorial Army of a hundred thousand men, who had already seen service, was called up, and artillery was bought wherever it could be obtained, for, with John Bull's well-known optimism, scant preparation in material had been made for the War.

Volunteers flocked to the Colours, the City of London raising a special corps known as the C.I.V. Kipling voiced the feeling of the nation in his rollicking song, *The Absent-minded Beggar*, with its refrain, "Cook's son, Duke's son, son of a belted Earl." But it was not only the sons of

belted Earls who volunteered. The Duke of Norfolk insisted on going, to the great astonishment of Lord Salisbury, who is reported to have said on hearing the news, "Go to Bath ! You will be telling me that old Cross is going next." A great many of our friends enlisted in the ranks of the C.I.V., who set out, cheered by the whole nation. Rumour said that the last that was seen of Mr. Sidney Peel was struggling with a large carcase of frozen beef in his arms, which he was attempting to transport to the kitchen regions on board his troop-ship. We got up a small subscription among our neighbours to provide the Surrey contingent of the Imperial Yeomanry with forty pairs of field-glasses. They were quite easy to collect, and I remember that my first sight of the present Lord Ashcombe, now Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, was when I went to the Cubitt Estate Office to interview the then Captain Cubitt and told him of the small contribution our Surrey neighbours had made.

Miss Kingsley was not the person to be content to stay in England at such a time. In February (1900) she went out to the Cape on the same troop-ship as General Rundle and Staff, and the Staff of General Carrington. She writes to St. Loe from "The Moon, South Atlantic Ocean," complaining of the extraordinary noise and commotion on board ship. In a letter found among her papers after her death she tells St. Loe how "with my usual luck I have dropped in for a repulsive job."

" British Hotel,

" Simonstown.

" (*Undated.*)

" I went and offered my services to General Wilson, P.M.O., at the Castle at Capetown ; he said he would

be glad to put me on active service at once, if I would come over here and see to the Boer prisoners' hospital, which was giving trouble, and as I had said I would do what I could to help him as a nurse, I of course had to say yes, and came on here forthwith, and a pretty state of affairs I found."

The letter is too long to quote extensively, but it is full of her usual mixture of humour and tragedy. Of her patients she says :

"Moreover, the Boers are family men, and when you rouse one to feed or physic him, he asks after his family and then after his trousers, because of the money in them. Well, you cannot give a satisfactory account of either. If there is a member of his family in the Hospital, as in very many cases there are—that man is dead or dying. As for his trousers, they are in a heap in the back yard, so you lie both ways. I do, and say 'It's all right' in both cases, which I know it isn't, or that 'I will find out,' which I know I can't, and the patient returns to his oblivion and I to another patient."

The following extract will go home to all those who nursed in great hospitals during the Great War :

"When a man is dying definitely, you don't like the two next to turn to see the performance, so you trot off and find the two little screens. Well, the other two know what those screens mean perfectly well, only they think they are there for them, so they start off on dying too. We have had four or five a night dying under these conditions since I was here on Sunday. Then there are the never-to-be-forgotten bugs and lice. They swarm. 'The

Palace ' supplies the bugs free of charge, the patients the lice ; they get on well together and make common cause on humanity, of course including you."

She goes on :

" Your freedom of institutions, etc., etc., etc., is slavery to them (the Boers), and they will not be grateful for your advantages. They want their own country their very own ; it works out in all their delirium—' *ons Land, ons Land !* ' One of them held forth to me to-day, a sane one, how he knew every hill's name, every bend of the river's name, every twist in the road—his hills, roads, rivers, not England's, or Germany's, but ' *ons Land.* ' We English are born Imperialists, these men are born nationalists ; but I will say no more on that now ; it is a rocky problem for the future."

The fragment ends :

" Filthy, lousy, dirty as they are, they are a nice people and very gentlemanly when they are not poisoned with their Old Testament system of morality—a system which knows no honour, which keeps no faith between man and man—a system worse than Fetish."

She died on June 3rd, 1900, as truly giving her life for England as any man who joined the Colours. A woman with the brain of a statesman, she fell nursing in a prisoners' hospital. Truly may we say of her, "*Sed miles sed pro patria.*"

In the month of January 1900 a little man called Victor de Brandt called at the *Spectator* office. He purported to know (I do not remember what explanation he gave of

his sources of information) that a great attack would be made on Ladysmith on a certain date, which I have now forgotten. St. Loe thought this information just worth sending to the Intelligence Department, and Sir John Ardagh wrote to him that he regarded the information as of sufficient importance to communicate to Sir Redvers Buller, leaving that General to judge of its value. Sir John Ardagh also welcomed a suggestion which St. Loe made of obtaining an article on the Boer plans, and asked to be allowed to see it.

After one or two further interviews Mr. Brandt expressed his wish to get in touch with the Intelligence Office and to transmit from time to time information which he would be able to obtain. At that moment Dr. Leyds of the Orange Free State was in Holland, and on February 27th, 1900, Mr. Brandt wrote to St. Loe from Paris :

“ I have arranged with Sir John Ardagh to transmit my reports from here to your address first, when you will be kind enough to send them on to Sir John without delay. I am highly satisfied with my journey to Paris, as I have gathered news of considerable importance. To-night I start for Brussels, where I hope to see ‘ His Excellency ’ Leyds.”

I don't remember what happened in Brussels, but undoubtedly, when he came back, Mr. Brandt, who was afterwards christened by Sir Redvers Buller “ the *Spectator* Spy,” was not pleased with his treatment. He described to St. Loe how he had “ caught a ‘ bronchite ’ watching in the draughty passages ” of the principal hotel, and complained that after he had suffered all this the Intelligence Department had turned him down.

The public events of the War may be read in any history book, but Lord Cromer's comments as the months proceeded are worth recording. In November (1900) he writes :

" I am greatly struck by the general attitude in England both of public men and the press—quite excellent, I think. I am glad on every ground. I have, as you know, always believed in the democracy under proper guidance. They are now being tried for the first time—not high, it is true, for the War has not seriously touched the working man, but so far the result seems to me eminently satisfactory."

The situation in Egypt was, of course, ticklish ; but in the same letter Lord Cromer congratulates himself on his relations with the Khedive.

" The Khedive is in a particularly good humour, due largely to the fact that the Sultan has been very rude to him and turned him out of Rhodes. I, of course, at once got him invited to Cyprus, with the result that we are now bosom friends. Some cacodæmon seems always to impel His Imperial Majesty to commit political suicide in dealing with Egypt. He ought to get Miss Kingsley—to whom pray give my kindest regards if you see her—to provide him with a brand-new tutelary Ju-Ju to keep him straight. He is constantly letting me know that if I will only muzzle the press (by which he means abstention even from good words) and give up all the refugees of the Young Turkish Party, there is nothing he will not do in return. By way of helping me in this direction he has sent here a small army of spies, who tell him lies. In

the meanwhile O'Connor" (our Ambassador in Constantinople) "writes to me that H.I.M. has 'a holy fear' of war. This is very gratifying and also useful."

In early December he writes :

"I have just seen an Englishman who left Pretoria after war was declared. He says that the Boers have immense stores of war material and food for the whole population for two years, that when Bloemfontein is taken—which ought not to be difficult—some of the Orange men may fall out, but that the Transvaal people will fight to the bitter end, and when defeated will take to the hills—in fact, that it will practically come to a war of extermination. I hope not."

Throughout the correspondence Lord Cromer stresses the importance of civilian control of the War Office. On December 22nd he writes :

"The general idea of the soldiers (who know little of the superior management of the army) is that it is all the fault of the 'War Office clerks' and that the military element wants strengthening. Nothing can be more erroneous. The superior military people have invariably resisted the most reasonable forms, which have been thrust down their throats by the superior Civil Element. For Heaven's sake let us maintain the power of the civilian statesmen. It is the only chance of getting anything done—but they should choose the *best* military people to help them."

On December 28th he writes :

"Kitchener swept through Cairo like a small military
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hurricane the other day. He seemed to know exactly what he wanted about shells and such like things, which is consolatory. From his language and telegrams I thought it desirable to point out to him that he was under Roberts, not Roberts under him."

Lord Roberts' rounding up of Cronje and his army at Paardeberg on February 29th, 1900, came together with the relief of Ladysmith. Mafeking still held out, and news came through sparsely of the hardships of the siege.

On Friday, May 25th (1900), Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Harmsworth had come to see the additions we had made to our house at Newlands Corner. At 9 o'clock in the evening a special messenger was sent up from the post office at Merrow with a telegram for Mr. Harmsworth from the *Daily Mail* saying that the gallant little city had at last been relieved. "By all the rules it was impossible for Mafeking to hold out for ten days, but General Baden-Powell and his men held it for over two hundred." The War lingered on for almost another two years, Botha being pursued across the Continent from blockhouse to blockhouse. Lord Roberts returned home in the November of 1900. Yet the Peace of Vereeniging was not signed till May 31st, 1902 ; but before this had happened the British world had been shaken by the end of the Victorian era.

CHAPTER XI

THE QUEEN'S PASSING

NO one who has not lived on intimate terms with a great editor can have any idea of what hard work it is for a person of average intelligence to keep up with his interests. St. Loe liked to talk everything over, and the stimulus and interest that this gave to my intellectual life cannot be imagined. I read almost as many papers as he, and I was a proud woman on any morning when I pointed out something that he had missed. From the moment that Mr. Townsend gave up editing and became a leader-writer, St. Loe, of course, dominated the *Spectator*, and, as he said, he was obliged once a week to proclaim his opinion on public affairs to the whole world. Incidentally, he used to observe that a journalist should have no friends. Indeed, he said he *could* not have any, as he might in the course of duty have to comment on them unfavourably in the pages of the *Spectator*. He used to remark gloomily that he would do very much better if he retired to a hermitage ; but I always told him that the pilgrimages up to the retreat in which he was sitting would be absolutely continuous, and that the echo of the debates which the hermit and the pilgrims would hold would resound far across any desert in which he had set up his cave.

Anyone would think that for the years '96 to 1902 the interests of South Africa and of the Boer War were sufficient to occupy our attention. That, however, was

far from being the case. Indeed, I can hardly find space even to allude to the events of interest in the years during which matters in South Africa were slowly approaching a crisis. There were the troubles of the Armenian massacres, Gladstone and Bismarck both died, the Spanish-American War took place, and '98 saw not only the advance in Egypt, already chronicled, but the reopening of the Dreyfus Case in France with the reputed assertion of Colonel Picquart, after the so-called "suicide" of Colonel Henry in prison, "If I am found dead in my cell, remember it will not be suicide."

The winding up of the Soudan expedition had come in November 1899 with the final defeat and death of the Khalifa. On December 2nd Lord Cromer wrote to St. Loe :

"Wingate tells me that when the Khalifa saw that the game was up, he sat down, and ranged his principal men in order of precedence round him in a circle. They waited thus until they were all swept away by a storm of bullets. Also he says that, in his first action against Ahmed Fedil, two men were found dead close up to our line tied right arm to left arm. They had, it appears, sworn to die together. They are fine savages."

A week later he continues :

"I have some ghastly photos of dead Khalifas and Emirs, which, when I come to England, I am going—unless his mother objects—to present to Tommy."

But the most moving event—an event which distracted our minds, even from Lord Roberts' successes in South

Africa—was the Boxer rebellion in China, with the siege of the foreign Embassies. There had been three weeks' silence with no telegrams from Peking, and I remember going to church on a certain hot Sunday in July (I suppose July 22nd) and the sermon being entirely concerned with the massacre of all the Europeans in Peking. The first paragraph of the *Spectator* of July 21st, 1900, ran : "There is no further hope for the European Embassies in Peking," and the news next week was equally gloomy. On August 4th word came through that "The Ambassadors, though besieged in Peking, are all alive, with the exception of the German, who was murdered under the eyes of his secretary, Herr Cordes, by an Imperial officer." There can hardly be any instance in modern history where specific news of such a tragedy turned out to be so fallacious. Matters were bad enough, but, though it was accurately stated that the Embassies were besieged on June 20th, the final catastrophe was purely apocryphal.

There had been a great controversy as to whether the nineteenth century had ended on January 1st, 1900, or whether the year 1900 should be included and the end of the century only be reached in 1901. If we adopt the opinion of the 1901 school of thought, we can dramatically group the end of the century with the death of Queen Victoria. To the public this came, as do the deaths of all crowned heads, with extraordinary suddenness. There is no word of her illness in the *Spectator* of January 19th, 1901, but by the issue of January 26th she had been dead four days. The nation was thunder-struck, and perhaps this is not surprising when we remember that Victoria was actually on the throne when people who were sixty-three at the time of her death were born. Even the septuagenarians had passed the whole of their adult life

in her reign, for my mother, who was seventy-six in 1901, was only eleven at the death of William IV. It was impossible to get used to the idea that the Victorian Age was over, and that one's whole life had passed in a period now closed. All sorts of little things were bewildering. The facts that all one's Q.C. friends became K.C.'s and that the very words of the National Anthem were altered were oddly upsetting. My mother wrote to me on January 25th :

“ It is all horrid as you say, and the first time I saw ‘ The King ’ in print I felt insulted. I went to lunch at Mount Browne on Tuesday. They had been charmed with H.M., but Lady Sligo said he was like his Grandfather in some respects, kept on saying, ‘ No, no, no, no,’ and ‘ Yes, yes, yes, yes ’ just as George III. did ‘ What, what, what.’ ”

My parents' home at Guildford, Millmead, was very near Limnerslease, where lived Mr. Watts—“ Signor,” as we all called him—and Mrs. Watts. My mother continues her letter :

“ I went yesterday to the Watts, who were very sympathetic. Watts said the Queen had made only three mistakes, not making friends with the Irish till so late, not putting herself at the head of London Society and so saving it from rowdyism, and not employing the Prince's mind in Government. However, I think she gained much popularity by her seclusion, at least in the colonies—and it would have been very difficult for the Prince to take a part without joining a party. I think she ought to have visited Ireland oftener. Watts said the two most truly courteous people he had known were the old Lord

Lansdowne and the Prince of Wales and that in both their perfect courtesy had its foundation in kindness of heart."

The excitement was enormous and, considering the seclusion in which Queen Victoria had lived, the genuine sorrow of the nation was very moving. St. Loe wrote in the *Spectator* :

" People often wonder what it was that gave the Queen the hold she had upon her people, and made her the object of such reverence to a race not given to veneration, but by nature inclined to be critical and undemonstrative. We believe that it was because the nation really understood her. After watching her for nearly seventy years, it had come to know her character in a way in which the character of a great personage is seldom known. Her character stood revealed in all its perfect simplicity and sincerity. The Queen was, above all things, truthful—the most truthful human being he had ever encountered was the verdict of the Quaker statesman, John Bright. Next came her courage, moral and physical. She never flinched, or failed, or despaired. Of vanity and *amour propre* she had probably as little as any human being ever had, and she did not know what it was to cherish a sense of injury or revenge. Her loyalty was absolute, and though Sovereigns are peculiarly liable to the charge of sacrificing their friends to political exigencies, there was no man or woman in the Kingdom who could say truthfully and with reason that they had been taken up and dropped or sacrificed by the Queen. She was the soul of honour and of honest dealing. Lastly, in her the sense of duty was, as we have said elsewhere, 'an inward light that made the path before her always bright.' Add to this that she possessed a

serenity and equanimity of temperament which enabled her to keep not only a brave face, but a brave heart, however great her public anxieties."

The new King first spoke to the nation at his first Council in St. James's Palace. He proclaimed, "I have resolved to be known by the name of Edward, which has been borne by six of my ancestors." He then proceeded to say that the reason why he did not wish to be called by his father's name was that he had been known by the name of Albert the Good, "and I desire that his name should stand alone." The German Emperor, with characteristic impetuosity, hurried from the Bicentenary celebrations in Berlin and proceeded to Osborne, this hasty action going far in sentimental England to wipe out his telegram to Kruger five years before. The tributes of the Press were, of course, overwhelming, and every minor poet in England burst into verse. It was not till the year after that a little poem was published in the *Spectator* which struck my imagination, not so much by the beauty of the verse as by the image which it presented of the soldiers still falling in the unfinished war, standing in serried ranks to receive the spirit of the Queen.

*But where, in that mysterious place,
The spirits of her soldiers dead,
Who died before they saw her face,
Day after day were gathered,
Those awed, expectant ranks between
The whisper ran: "The Queen! The Queen!"*

On the other side of the picture, it had been so long since what is called in official language "a demise of the

Crown" had occurred that nobody knew quite what etiquette demanded. Scant time was left to look out precedents, for only ten days elapsed between Tuesday, January 22nd, and the funeral on Saturday, February 2nd. Indeed, the ceremonial matters had to be finished by the Friday, for on that day the Queen's body was to be removed from Osborne. There was to be no lying-in-state in London, but a procession was arranged to pass from Victoria to Paddington, where the coffin was to be entrained for Windsor. Very strange things occurred as to the invitations to view the ceremony at Windsor. One most respectable peeress received a summons with the details of the costume to be worn, running : " Morning dress with trousers." But, in spite of the haste, the passage through London with the coffin on a simple gun-carriage and the funeral at Windsor went off with fitting impressiveness.

But far more moving was the naval ceremony which marked the passing from the Isle of Wight to Portsmouth Harbour. For some reason St. Loe was sent not one, but two tickets for the Press boat, so that I could accompany him. Here, again, the irrepressible humour of circumstances stepped in to lighten our gloom. I had no black hat and it was necessary that, going by sea on what might be a very windy day, I should have a hat covered with crape and warranted to stay on. There was only one place where I knew I could obtain it, and I hurried off to Robert Heath in Knightsbridge. The gloom of the nation was nothing to what I found in that establishment, and the assistant, who finally found a hat which would do, might have been trained as a mute at a funeral. I made some suitable and banal remarks, to which she replied, " Yes, moddam, but think how we must feel it ! The dear

Queen always got her hats here." Till quite recently a glass case of crushed and dilapidated headgear adorned Mrs. Heath's showroom. Trying to console her, I observed that perhaps the new Queen would continue the royal patronage, whereupon she turned up her nose and remarked with great contempt, "Oh, yes, moddom. But that won't be at all the same thing. She is only a Consort."

Friday, February 8th, dawned foggily in London, and the special train ran very early to Portsmouth. A long line of battleships, cruisers and gunboats stretched almost from the Isle of Wight to the Harbour, and among these the Press boat was anchored. The sight of these great ships, waiting in silence for the passing of their Sovereign, held and stilled the imagination. I remember thinking it quite unfitting when at lunch our colleagues of the Press discussed the next great ceremony—the marriage of the Queen of Holland—which they had been posted to attend. But once the moment of the passing came all other thoughts were silenced. Far in the distance came the sound of minute guns and the roll of drums, as the band of ship after ship burst into the passionate wail of Chopin's *Funeral March*. The day had been bright, but at 3 o'clock on a February afternoon the mists were already gathering a little. Then, silently, six torpedo-destroyers glided slowly past. After them came the little *Alberta*, the decks cleared except for the coffin with its white pall, and the look-out in the bows gazing steadfastly forward. There lay all that was left of the woman who had been our Ruler so long. Crown and sceptre, bridal wreath, widow's weeds, all laid aside. Silently the ships passed. The sun was setting behind the Island. Into the mists passed the yacht and its burden, and the age of Victoria was over.

PART II

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SOWS
ITS WILD OATS

CHAPTER I

FOUR WORDS FROM MR. BALFOUR

Both St. Loe and I always liked beginnings, and there was a certain pleasurable excitement, when the pageant of the Queen's funeral was over, in settling down to a New Century and a New Reign. What would the twentieth century bring to England? How would the new King behave? St. Loe looked forward with alert curiosity.

The first sensation was provided by Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons. Everyone in London had been whispering under their breath questions as to the financial situation at the Court. Was the King embarrassed financially, and how in a democracy could such a situation be met? When, behold, in four simple words Mr. Balfour stated that no situation existed :

“ There have been times when the discussion was rendered more difficult by the fact that the country was called upon not only to provide a Civil List for the future needs of the Crown, but to deal with debts contracted by the Sovereign before his accession. No such embarrassments will occur on the present occasion. *There are no debts.*”

London Society held its breath. What had become of them, then? How in the position which the Prince of Wales had occupied so long was it possible to avoid debts? But it was no good asking. The Prime Minister's statement was, of course, accepted, and the mystery

was never cleared up to the public. Routings and readjustments were, however, made in the royal residences. These were still maintained on an 1864 basis—hosts of servants in the empty palaces, furnishings and decorations decidedly “dating.” There had been a great many stories current as to the badness of the Court food. Notably a German diplomat had been said to complain bitterly that, when he dined with the Queen, he was given “smashed potatoes and peas like artillery bullets !” But the King was determined that it was fitting for a new and active monarch to live in a more stately fashion than a widowed Queen in seclusion. The palaces were all done up. The staffing was put on a more concentrated, and therefore more economic, basis. Sandringham and Balmoral were retained, but Osborne was given to the nation.

Our private lives had changed. St. Loe, in his more responsible position, found it quite impossible always to leave London at Easter, and we had, therefore, taken a furnished house till Whitsuntide in the winter of 1900, instead of going, as usual, to 14, Cornwall Gardens. The public events in the last years of the nineteenth century were so momentous that there has been little space to speak of our own affairs ; but, of course, the question of education had long before 1901 loomed largely before us. As far as Tommy was concerned, we had settled it by sending him to a day school in Guildford. We had tried a winter day school in London, with the result that Tommy caught cold after cold and only got to school one week out of four. In the summer he rode the perfectly round pony over the Downs, put it up at an inn at Guildford, and walked to school—an arrangement which I am afraid we thought more ideal than he found it. In the winter he stayed with my mother, looked after by my old nurse, Mrs.

Barker, at Millmead. Through his interest in the Boer War he developed a great love of naval and military matters, and what he did not know about the Fleet and the position of every ship was not worth knowing. His letters, in a large round hand, had for some time been adorned by portraits of Hotchkiss guns in red ink and caricatures of Kruger. His great desire was to go into the Navy, but a slight physical disability prevented this, and, rather at the last moment, when he was just short of thirteen, we found him a place in a house at Eton, where he went in January 1902. His preparatory school had not been a success. It was conducted by certain ladies, who unfortunately took a great dislike to St. Loe and me and vented this dislike on Tommy, so we took him away rather early and gave him a tutor before he went to Eton. I must say I feel envious of my daughter when I hear the delightful principles on which the schools are conducted to which my grandchildren go. Neither Tommy nor Amabel had such a chance as that. Their great asset educationally was that their father did much of his work at home and so saw a great deal of them. They both responded marvellously to the mental stimulus of his talk. Certainly no one who did not see St. Loe with his children ever really knew him. I shall never forget the extraordinary way in which he adapted his mind to their level, played with them like another child, yet answered the million questions which they asked, like an encyclopædia. I took shameless advantage of this, and when either of them propounded conundrums to me, I always said, "I don't know at all. Let's ask your father." And he always knew, or could find out.

Early in 1901 it became obvious that a third baby was in the autumn to be added to the family. Fortunately for

me, the additions to Newlands were finished. The new Great Parlour, planned by Harry and me, was forty feet long by twenty-seven feet wide. This was lined with books, the shelves fixed to within two feet of the ceiling. It was in this room that a guest once said to me, "I do envy St. Loe's books. Every book in this room knows that probably some day he will reach up, take it down, and read something in it." There is a characteristic photograph of him, taken by a local photographer, with his hand on a high shelf, obviously talking eagerly to the person who had asked for a reference. In this room, also, I had been able to carry out my fixed idea that in order that a room should be thoroughly restful, it is as well only to have one picture in it. From 1900 onwards the Great Parlour, as we called it—for it was a lineal descendent of the Great Parlour at Sutton Court—became the focus of our lives. There we sat, there St. Loe worked, and there took place a function always called by the reigning baby "Comin' down after tea." This was the moment that the children played at tobogganing and caves. The tobogganing was done by pulling the child along the slippery oak floor seated on a rug. Lord Cromer in his visits was a great exponent of this pastime ; but, as he always came in the summer, we never asked him to make one of the pirates or bears which lurked in the cave, fashioned of armchairs and rugs erected in the middle of the red carpet. It was a marvellous room to play in, though the absence of furniture was startling to Victorian eyes. Indeed, the first time my mother saw it she declared it looked as if it had been cleared for a ball. There were two sofas, however, and enough armchairs for comfort, but a great space was left in the middle of the room. For the twenty-six years in which we inhabited it we could make any sort of riot—

bears' caves, Christmas trees, dances, and later Patients' Concerts, and—the festivity over—in about five minutes the room could be restored to its pristine tidiness. But even in the holidays the children did not always want riotous games. From the beginning of 1902 onwards the Great Parlour often heard Shakespeare and Ibsen plays read aloud, though the Ibsen belongs to a rather later period. I shall never forget the effect on my family some years later of my reading them *Rosmersholm*, their first introduction to modern psychology.

It was not only for the children or for our own amusement that the big room and the fields at Newlands were useful. St. Loe from 1900 began to take a considerable part in the consideration of the auxiliary military requirements of the country. He had been horrified by the want of preparation in the matter of rifle shooting in the Boer War, and threw himself heart and soul into the movement for Village Rifle Clubs, in which the Morris tube was made use of. Considering the difficulties that had been encountered in South Africa, it might be thought that the idea of teaching marksmanship would have been welcomed by the authorities ; but from April to September 1900 St. Loe was wrangling with the Treasury on the subject of the licence necessary for the possession of a rifle. At last, on his return from South Africa, Lord Roberts took a hand. St. Loe went to see him in February 1901. In March Lord Roberts wrote to him, recognising that, if Rifle Clubs were to be satisfactorily worked, the members must be encouraged, and saying that St. Loe's idea of a free 10s. gun-licence being granted to anyone who could produce a certificate of marksmanship was reasonable.

At Bisley that year the *Spectator* offered a prize for
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members of Village Rifle Clubs. Lord Roberts took a great interest in this, and asked whether the teams had been trained with the Morris tube arrangement.

Still there was the question of rifles, and much discussion took place both as to weapons and ranges. In the Newlands meadows we duly inaugurated a Rifle Club affiliated to the National Rifle Association. I, in great trepidation, was made to fire the first shot, and to the chagrin of the marker, it went nowhere near the target. St. Loe had better luck and registered a bull's-eye. The Rifle Club movement excited considerable attention ; but the soldiers in South Africa regarded it with scorn, and wrote home private letters alluding sarcastically to the fact that " Strachey thinks he could bring out his butler and his gardener in case of an emergency and that they would prove useful ! "

Our baby was expected in October, 1901 ; but in August of that year St. Loe was summoned to Sutton by his father's desperate illness, and the month was darkened for us by his death. A letter from Mr. Horatio Brown written a few weeks afterwards sums up Sir Edward's character so accurately that I must quote it here.

" I must send you just a word of sympathy on the death of your father. It is sad to think of so sweet, so delicate, so beautiful a mind gone from among us, but those who knew him are the richer for the memory of him and one could hardly desire for him a prolongation of old age."

The baby, to whom Lord Cromer was godfather, was born on October 21st, and in January (1902) we all repaired to a house in Cadogan Square, which we had taken till Whitsuntide. By January St. Loe always felt the going up and down to the *Spectator* office too much for him, and

so the move to London was obligatory, though we made it with some reluctance because there was a smallpox scare. I had been ill since October, and vaccination made me ten times worse. I was therefore not very fit to bear the shock of learning that my father was rapidly losing his sight. Just at that moment my people had an offer for 14, Cornwall Gardens and they had to turn out. There are most sympathetic letters from St. Loe to my mother, with serious warnings that she and my father should take things easily. "If I were you," he says, "I should let things drift at C.G. and bother very little whether you did or did not bring down every little object you want. Sir William Bowman killed himself by debating at length on the spot whether he should take to the country old *Bradshaws* and old *Clergy Lists* and so on!! It is not worth it." Twenty-five years later I was to recall this letter with great misgivings.

My father died in the following May at Millmead House. In spite of his formal and precise ways, the tenderest ties of affection united him to St. Loe. I think never throughout those whole twelve years did he address St. Loe as anything but "Strachey." He said that if he spoke of him as St. Loe, outsiders would wonder at his informality. Such was the formality of the Victorian age! It was touching to find after his death how this silent, reserved man had impressed his extreme ability and strength of character on his contemporaries. He was an equity lawyer, and whenever anybody had a piece of really difficult conveyancing it was brought to him to draft. He was Junior Counsel to the Post Office for many years, and I believe it was his doing that the Government were able to take over the telephones. He always thought that the inventions of science with regard to communication were only in their infancy. I am

afraid this is not a very accurate account, but I know that he told us once that he had made a draft with regard to the Government having the monopoly of telegrams which would cover any other means of communication of which wire was the medium. When, therefore, telephones were instituted, it became the right of the Government to take over from the National Telephone Company, which, as all the world knows, they did in 1911. He was an extremely delicate man, and, although he enjoyed going into court, it made him so ill that very early in his practice he entirely gave it up, with the consequence that he could never take silk. Notwithstanding this fact, he was made a Bencher of his Inn, Lincoln's Inn, and this little piece of recognition coming into his shy, withdrawn life gave him infinite pleasure. One of his fellow-Benchers once spoke of him to St. Loe as "the dearest old gentleman," and he has left a picture in my mind of precision, ability and rectitude which it would be hard to equal.

In 1902 the world was looking forward to an extremely busy season. Peace had been signed at Vereeniging on terms which caused all strait-laced Tories to say that we might just as well have lost the war. Perhaps those who during the last ten years have had an opportunity of observing the consequences of a vindictive Peace have changed their opinion ; but the reactionaries said bitterly that the Government were obviously all pro-Boers, and the reason that they wanted the peace signed was that the King wished to have the Guards back for his coronation. The preparations for this ceremony were immense. The Abbey was closed for weeks so that it might be arranged like the auditorium of a theatre. London was crowded to suffocation ; the streets were being hung with bunting ; the flags of all nations waved in the air ; stands

were being erected along the route of the procession. Suddenly the rumour flew like wildfire that the King was lying at the point of death ! The hammers dropped from the workmen's hands, the streets became absolutely still, and everybody whispered to his neighbour of a prophecy which had been made to the King, while Prince of Wales, that he would never live to be crowned. Nothing so dramatic can ever have happened since the good fairy struck the King and Court of the Sleeping Beauty into a hundred years' immobility. The King was in the hands of the surgeons ; would the operation be in time ? The excitement was tense. We were at Newlands, and I remember meeting St. Loe at Clandon Station, when out of the train stepped our Guildford doctor, Dr. Percy Gabb, to whom we eagerly gave a lift and asked him what in his opinion were the chances. He told us that if the operation was not too late, the King would probably do well, and his prognosis proved correct. The abscess had not burst, and the King's life was saved.

As soon as the King was convalescent, the then Prince of Wales (now King George), as deputy for his father, held the great ceremony which had been arranged for the native princes at the India Office. We were sent an invitation, but I was in such deep mourning that I did not go. St. Loe climbed into his Court suit and set off to dine—I don't remember where—before the party took place. He told me of his adventures next day. He had got rather fat and his breeches were decidedly tight. He went on from the dinner, wherever it was, with Miss Violet Brooke-Hunt, later to take so prominent a part in the organisation of the Women's Tariff Reform League—a great friend of ours. Getting out of the cab at the India Office, his breeches burst down the outside seam of the leg. The devastation

was great, and Violet Brooke-Hunt commiserated with him on what a pity it was that he would have to go home. This, indeed, is what anyone else would have done ; but St. Loe was quite undaunted. " This is a Government office," he said. " A Government office must have a caretaker, and the caretaker must have a wife. I shall go to the lodge." And to the lodge he went. There a sympathetic female produced needle and cotton ; St. Loe put his leg up on a chair, then and there was sewn up, and made a triumphant appearance at the party. He described most vividly the beauty of the ceremony. The whole quadrangle of the India Office was roofed in with canvas representing a starlit sky, turning it into a sort of Durbar Hall. The company looked out of the India Office windows at the great procession of native princes who passed before the Prince, thrusting forward the hilts of their swords in homage.

Though everybody thought King Edward most rash, he with great courage insisted on the Coronation taking place on August 9th. To a certain extent the ceremonial situation of the Queen's funeral was repeated, for the " properties " for a Coronation had not been used for so long that everybody was a little uncertain as to how to deal with them. For instance, a great many peers discovered that they had no coronets, and one very frugal Scottish peer told a delightful tale of inquiring the price of a coronet at some celebrated goldsmith's. When he was told, he expostulated on the largeness of the sum for an ornament which probably would only be used once. " Ah, your Lordship must remember," said the jeweller, " how handsome it will look on the coffin at your Lordship's funeral."

The King suffered no ill effects, and by his courage and determination the unkind predictions of the gipsy were defeated.

CHAPTER II

AMERICA

“ There lies your way, due West.
Then Westward Ho ! ”

—*Twelfth Night.*

St. Loe never attempted to conceal the fact of his love for America, though he was much laughed at by many of his friends, especially by Mr. Leo Maxse of the *National Review*, for being, as they thought, “ taken in ” by that delightful nation. Mr. Hay himself, when Secretary of State, wrote to him :

“ I read the *Spectator* every week, and am glad to think that in this way I sometimes hear your voice and exchange ideas with you. You are always just to us. Sometimes you do us a little more than justice.”

The rest of the letter, though full of interest, is, as its writer states, “ of a furious indiscretion,” and cannot be recorded here.

With these sentiments, it may be imagined with what pleasure he welcomed the institution in the late nineties of a correspondence with Mr. Roosevelt, then Governor of the State of New York. The introductory letters have been lost, and the correspondence opens at the end of January 1900. The general characteristics of Mr. Roosevelt's letters were careful and neat typing on the part of his secretaries and enormous and often extremely illegible

marginal notes in his own hand—these notes generally containing the pith of the letter. As I have previously mentioned, we had hoped to go to America in the autumn of 1899 and had been asked to Albany by Mr. Roosevelt. In November 1900 he gives St. Loe an account of what he calls his “great campaign” for the Vice-Presidency. He had hated to accept the nomination, and he wrote with perfect sincerity, “I have no expectation of going on any further in public life.” I had shared with the then Captain Arthur Lee (now Lord Lee of Fareham) a curious premonition as to that presidential election, that this would not be the end of the story. But obviously the office of Vice-President gave Mr. Roosevelt much leisure, because there are references in his letters to hunting trips in the Rockies, and it was about that time that he sent his book to St. Loe on *The Strenuous Life*. An unexpected light is thrown on his character in a letter of March 8th, 1901. “At times,” he says, “I feel an almost Greek horror of extremes,” and he goes on to animadvert on the harm which is done by the people who want to make things “so easy for the criminal as to encourage crime,” the long list of evil-doers ending with the intemperate prohibition advocates. After the McKinley tragedy St. Loe wrote to him on September 23rd as “Dear Mr. President,” saying that he hoped that what he had written in the previous Saturday’s *Spectator* would not be thought cold and unsympathetic by Mr. Roosevelt. “I felt more warmly than I wrote, but I was anxious not to slop over and so be misunderstood on your side. . . . Knowing what harm is done in your country by anything which seems to ticket a man as a friend to England, I was careful to give no occasion for such misunderstanding.” On October 5th the President replied from “Executive Mansion, Washington,” that he

“ had seen the piece in the *Spectator* and particularly appreciated it. I liked all that it said ; and I appreciate all that it left unsaid. Now, if I had time I would write you with entire freedom and at great length on many subjects ; for, my dear sir, though I have never met you, you are one of the men to whom I am willing to write with the most absolute confidence—as I think I have shown in my last letters to you. But in my present position I suppose I have no right to put anything on paper save with a caution that would render the effort in the case of a letter rather burdensome.” Mr. Roosevelt concluded with a cordial invitation to the White House, “ to let you see for yourself all the inner workings of American national politics, just as I should have shown you all the inner workings of State politics, if you could have come over while I was Governor.” With regard to the substitution of the designation “ Executive Mansion ” for White House, Mr. Roosevelt’s sister, Mrs. Douglas Robinson, told me in the following summer, when she and her husband came to Newlands, that she, in common with all Americans who love the history of their country, had deeply regretted the change from “ The White House.” She wrote expressing this to her brother, who replied instantly, “ It’s off already ! ” and the next letter to St. Loe was duly stamped “ White House.” The imminence of my baby’s arrival prevented us from accepting the President’s invitation till a whole year had elapsed.

At the end of November 1901, Mr. Roosevelt wrote to St. Loe as to the Booker Washington incident, “ no one could possibly be as astounded as I was at the sensation caused by the incident. I never thought one way or the other about it, so far as outside effect was concerned, and simply asked Booker Washington to dinner because he is

one of the most distinguished, and without exception the most useful, of the men of the South, and I wanted to talk over with him certain matters." It will be remembered that Booker Washington was a most distinguished and educated negro, and it is to his exertions that much of the advance in the status of the negroes in America is due.

An interesting letter of July 18th, 1902, was annotated by St. Loe. In it the President first alludes to the Alaska boundary dispute, discussions as to which were to play so large a part in our visit of November of the same year. "I do not think," said the President, "the Canadians have a leg to stand on in the Alaska boundary business; and this being the case, I do not see how I can assent to any compromise. And yet I thoroughly understand how the English, in this moment of victory, when the Canadians as well as the citizens of the other colonial commonwealths have stood by them so loyally, feel that they must stand by the Canadians in return. When you come over here, I want to go over the whole Alaska boundary matter with you." St. Loe's note (his letter is not extant) is to the effect that he had replied to this that "my difficulty about the Alaska boundary question was the point of arbitration. If America refused arbitration, how could I support that side in the *Spectator*, when in the case of the Venezuela boundary question (1895-6) I had so strongly urged that England should consent to arbitration."

By July our passages in the *Lucania* had for some time been taken for early November. Lord Cromer wrote to St. Loe at the Waldorf-Astoria :

"I am delighted to hear that you are going to America.

I have not been able to follow the details of their Cuban and Philippine affairs, but I take the greatest interest in them, and am keenly anxious that the administration should be successful—and this, not only on account of my general sympathy for Americans, but also because I want the world to see that Anglo-Saxons can govern a decadent Latin race.”

As soon as we landed, we received a letter asking us to stay with the President and Mrs. Roosevelt at the White House for two days on November 24th. It is impossible to describe the thrill and excitement, entirely shared by me, with which St. Loe regarded his first setting foot on the shores of the New World. This was deferred for some hours by a tantalising mishap. The *Lucania* stuck on a sand-bank, and, though certain letters (notably one asking St. Loe to a great dinner that night) were flung on board, we all had to sit expectant till the next tide floated her off. When we finally moved, it was near the early sunset of a November afternoon, and we steamed slowly into New York harbour with a great pageant of blood-red sky in the west and the towers and steeples of the skyscrapers outlined against it in a manner which made us hold our breath with its beauty. The reporters arrived, of course, in full force, and St. Loe proceeded neatly to interview them. This was always his practice with his own profession. “Dog,” he used to say oracularly, “does not eat dog.” But he was unable to restrain his admiration for this first view of the city, and a headline in the New York papers next day ran, “EDITOR STRACHEY SAYS NEW YORK SKINS VENICE.” St. Loe had been too sea-sick to come much on deck, and therefore certain magnates of the financial world were entirely ignorant of the fact that he was on board, and when, as we slowly approached

the dock at about 10 o'clock at night, they saw Mr. Douglas Robinson, the President's brother-in-law, patiently waiting by the gangway, they were filled with curiosity as to whom he could have come to meet. We modestly admitted that he had come for us, which was not only very good of him, but saved our lives in the Customs house, for, although Mr. Hay, then Secretary of State, had most kindly sent us the courtesy of the port, this did not seem to me to make much difference in the routings and disembowellings of the contents of my trunks. At last it was over, and tense with excitement we drove off in a cab to the Waldorf-Astoria, where our old friend Mrs. Cadwalader, Jones had secured us rooms, in spite of the fact that it was Horse Show Week. The little streets of houses near the docks reminded us of nothing so much as of the houses in Collingham Gardens, South Kensington, and we immediately felt that our feeling of kinship for the city had a certain foundation in fact. The gracious American custom of "bunching" the expected guest had filled our rooms with flowers, and for the first time we told each other we were to sleep in the New World. As a matter of fact, I personally slept not one wink, but such is the effect of American air on my constitution that I was not the very least tired next morning and was quite ready to take my modest part in the strenuous programme which had been prepared for us. St. Loe saw many of the distinguished men in the city, and we had a delightful time lunching and dining out, and prowling about the streets gay in the warmth of a delightful Indian summer. One day we journeyed to Tuxedo, our first sight of a typical smart American settlement, complete with its club-house, etc. We lunched near by at Ringwood, New Jersey, with Mr. Abraham Hewitt, who, having recently been Mayor of

New York, was always known as "Mayor Hewitt." His firm made munitions, and he told us marvellous stories of the part he had taken in providing cannon during the Civil War and of President Lincoln's recognition of his services and readjustment of the finance. "Did anyone pay you?" the President asked him, and he modestly admitted that patriotism had been his sole reward.

There was, unfortunately, a strike of the hard coal mines at that time, and the Waldorf was as smutty as if it had been in London. Telephonic communication in America was in its infancy, and I remember well how one's only plan was to send a messenger with a note in every case where it was possible, as the posts were unreliable and the telephones practically dumb. Two delightful visits to Long Island, dinners with the Douglas Robinsons, Dr. and Mrs. Nicholas Murray Butler, and Mrs. Cadwalader Jones, the Horse Show, and dinner at Sherry's with Miss Alice Blight are the occasions which stand out most clearly in my memory—these and the grand tea-party which we gave just before we left in St. Loe's and my rooms (with the beds curtained off) to all the people who had entertained us. It was very amusing, and it was marvellous with what kindness these distinguished people flocked to our little rooms. The company included, among others, the imposing figure of Mr. Thomas Reed, who as Speaker was responsible for passing those rules of Congress which have since governed that assemblage. Such was his force of character that he was known as "Czar Reed." He was the author of the cynical saying, "A statesman is a politician—who is dead."

At last the day dawned when the long promised visit to Washington was to be paid. We were told to come by a train arriving some time after six o'clock in the evening,

and there was a solid cause for this hour being named, as Mrs. Cole, President Roosevelt's other most delightful sister, told me after dinner that same evening, for the White House had just been done up by Mr. McKim (head of the firm of McKim, Meade & White), and the furnishing was hardly completed. Indeed, the bed in the room which was to be mine was not brought in till four o'clock that afternoon. We ought, of course, to have put our evening garments into our hand-bags, but being innocent travellers we imagined that our luggage would be delivered by express within half an hour. On arriving at the White House we were received by one of those delightful messengers who look like Second Division Civil Service clerks, shown to our room, and told that dinner was to be I forget exactly when, but we had barely an hour to get ready, and there were no trunks ! I did my hair and made every preparation that I could. St. Loe was so thrilled by being at the White House that he would most cheerfully have dined in his travelling clothes. Luckily, he did not know then that the room which he had been given was, though re-partitioned, on the site of the room in which Mr. Hay had worked when he was Secretary to St. Loe's great hero, President Lincoln. With just ten minutes to spare, the trunks were brought in. We both got ready in frantic haste, and I had just fastened my last hook, for it must be remembered that clothes were much more elaborate in those days, when a knock at the door warned us that the time had come for us to join the company. I don't mind saying that I was petrified with fright. We were shown into a room where a single gentleman was rocking comfortably with his feet in the fender. It was the President, and his start of welcome and cordial words—"I am very, very glad to see you"—removed

even my shyness in a moment, while St. Loe felt that he had met a friend whom he had known all his life. A large State dinner followed. There were many members of the American Cabinet, foreign diplomats, and other personages. After dinner I inquired anxiously as to the proper etiquette, and was told that all the President would allow was that the company should stand up when he came into the room and not sit down till he did. The only other members of the house party were a German diplomat, Baron Speck von Sternberg (I think he was on a special mission), and his wife. I have a feeling that she addressed him as "Spec," which always made me turn round because we had already begun to call St. Loe "Ed. *Spec.*" whenever we wanted to tease him. There was a great question as to breakfast. The President breakfasted at eight; Mrs. Roosevelt and Baroness von Sternberg felt that bed was better than this. But I knew that there would be most entertaining conversation at eight, and I determined to get up. I hope I was not in the way, but on the two mornings we were there, I sat at breakfast all ears. The Alaska boundary was the subject of conversation, and after breakfast the President ushered St. Loe into his business room. A most amusing episode followed, which St. Loe told me before lunch, and which he has touched on in *The Adventure of Living*. The President was eagerly talking to him, when an ambassador, I think the Italian, was ushered in. St. Loe offered to withdraw, but the President said, "No, no. Stay where you are." Presently one after another the members of the Cabinet appeared, and before St. Loe knew where he was, the President had sat down at his table and begun a Cabinet meeting. St. Loe really did not know what to do. Finally he whispered to Mr. Hay, the Secretary of State, "The President has not

dismissed me ; but don't you think I had really better go ? ” Mr. Hay bowed formally, and St. Loe tiptoed out of the room. At luncheon he apologised, saying perhaps it was a breach of etiquette to go before he was dismissed, but that he thought the President had forgotten his presence. “ My dear Strachey,” said the President, “ you acted with perfect tact, perfect tact.” There was a British pendant to this story later on in the inquiry of a recently joined member of Mr. Balfour's Cabinet—“ Can you tell me who it is who comes to Cabinet meetings whom Mr. Balfour always calls Harry ? ” It was, of course, Mr. Harry White, Chief Secretary of the American Embassy, who with his wife made so great an impression on London Society, and who himself was deep in the counsels of the Cabinet.

To return to the White House, my real difficulty was to induce the President, in going into the elevator, etc., and walking about, to remember that he had to go first. On one occasion, when he and St. Loe were specially deep in Alaska, we all stood by the elevator for five minutes, until at last the President said, “ What are we waiting for ? ” “ For you to go in first, sir,” said I. “ Oh,” said the President, “ I never can remember that I am not free to behave like a gentleman ! ” The weather that day was atrocious, but this did not matter to me, for Mrs. Roosevelt took the Baroness and me to a wonderful concert given by a celebrated German singèr, whose name I forget. The music was delightful, but, as I confessed to Mrs. Roosevelt, I felt a little bare and cold at the end when no kind of National Anthem was played. “ I should so have liked,” said I, “ to have sung ‘ God Save the President. ’ ” St. Loe had a more strenuous afternoon, for, although the rain was pouring down, the President had to have

his exercise. After tea they set out in a "surrey" for the suburbs, and there St. Loe, mounted on a military saddle, galloped about with Mr. Roosevelt till it became entirely dark in a wood in which half the trees had been cut down, leaving pointed stumps. According to St. Loe, they talked hard the whole time, and I have no doubt of it.

After two days we left the White House and spent nearly a week more in a hotel, most hospitably entertained by friends and the friends of friends. Besides my witnessing one of Mrs. Roosevelt's receptions, which was very interesting, we were asked on the Sunday to come to tea quietly in the White House. We arrived, and found the President just finishing his fencing match and in a costume which, as he said, was only reminiscent of Tweedledum. After tea we proceeded into another room, and Mr. Roosevelt and St. Loe fell into deep conversation standing by the mantelpiece. Of course, we all stood too. Presently Mr. Roosevelt looked round, and, seeing us all erect, said in tones of exasperation, "Oh, *won't* you all sit down and let me stand?"

Apart from the cementing of St. Loe's friendship with Mr. Roosevelt, which had a real effect upon his life, we had a most delightful time in Washington. The Secretary of State and Mrs. Hay, whom, as I have said before, we had known in London, were most kind to us. Not only did they ask us to a large luncheon, but, what was even more interesting, we dined with them almost alone. At that dinner Mr. Hay told us about the arrangements of the White House in the days when he was President Lincoln's Secretary, and especially about the President's assassination. The whole of the second floor of the White House had not in those days been taken for the use of the President's

family. Indeed, the room which I had occupied had been either the Cabinet Room or the President's private study, I forget which, and on the site of the dressing-room which St. Loe had, Mr. Hay himself had sat and worked. He gave a most dramatic account of the evening of Good Friday, April 14th, 1865. It had been a pleasant, though busy, day at the White House. Lee had just surrendered and the War was over, and General Grant had attended a meeting of the Cabinet in the morning. About noon the President had resolved to go to the theatre, and had invited Mr. Hay to accompany him ; but, as Mr. Hay told us, he was very busy and preferred to stay at home, sitting in his room immersed in papers. The President always liked to be home early, but 10 o'clock came, and 10.30, and still there was no sign of him. Then, instead of the quiet entry which he had expected, Mr. Hay heard the sound of many feet, and perturbed conversation came to him as he sat upstairs. Instantly the conviction struck him, "There is something wrong !" and a messenger broke into the room telling him that the President had been assassinated in his box at Ford's Theatre. Even with the help of the plan in the official *Life of Lincoln*, it is difficult to understand how the assassin Booth managed to penetrate into the President's box. St. Loe, of course, had long been familiar with the dramatic circumstances, and knew that the handsome young actor, armed with a knife and a pistol, had entered behind the President, shot him, and leapt on to the stage, where, flourishing the bloody knife with which he had just stabbed the President's companion, he declaimed the motto of his State, Virginia—" *Sic semper tyrannus.*" Mr. Hay's story brought the whole drama vividly before our eyes, and for half an hour the great President lived again to those two fervent admirers,

one of whom had served him personally, while the other had dreamt of him.

We had many other interesting talks in Washington, though none so interesting as that. M. Jules Cambon, the French Ambassador, then, I think, the *doyen* of the Diplomatic Corps, was on the eve of retirement, and the hosts and hostesses of Washington combined dinners to us and to him in one event. He was charming company. I remember sitting by him two or three times and finding him most agreeable. Mrs. Cole, too, was as kind as her sister, Mrs. Douglas Robinson, while Mrs. Robinson and I talked about our children to our mutual satisfaction. St. Loe remembered, when we revisited Washington twenty-four years afterwards, how Mr. Roosevelt had taken him to the *piazza* at the back of the White House and shown him all the marshy land which he had planned to have reclaimed and turned into a city of lawns and palaces. When we returned after a quarter of a century his dream had been fulfilled.

Our whole journey, though it affected our minds so deeply, only occupied five weeks. St. Loe could not leave his paper, and, though Tommy was by this time at Eton, and Amabel and Baby John safe with my mother, I was very glad not to be away from them for more than this. We therefore returned to New York at about the end of a week, to find frost and a sprinkling of snow where we had left Indian summer. I shall never forget the look of Fifth Avenue, which was not so crowded with traffic in those days as it is now, in the sparkling glow of an early December sunset. The traffic, however, was sufficiently heavy for plans for underground services to be in hand. To add to the confusion, the road-menders seemed as bad in New York as in London, and Mrs. Robinson told an entertaining

story of how she or her husband (I forget which) had had a dream in which an angel said to them, "All is well. New York is down." Compared with the city of to-day, New York in 1902 was a provincial town with plenty of leisure. It will always be to me the gateway through which St. Loe and I had a fleeting glimpse of the wonders of the New World.

CHAPTER III

THE "SPECTATOR"

Far back in the nineties Mr. Hutton had said to St. Loe, "You will find it very pleasant here in the office when you take my place," and this, indeed, proved to be the fact. I do not think anyone ever enjoyed an editorship as much as St. Loe did. His independence of mind greatly resented the check of a superior authority. By this I do not in the least mean that he was not open to conviction by argument. What he objected to was writing something which he believed to be untrue or exaggerated because somebody else took another view. At the *Spectator* office it was the other people who had to convince him, if they wished to state their own views, and I am quite sure that none of his contributors found him unaffected by a serious argument. On certain basic principles he was adamant, and the chief of these was Free Trade. The exact date has probably passed from the minds of the present generation, but it was in May 1903 that Mr. Chamberlain at Birmingham for the first time threw down his Protectionist challenge. It was in connection with this and the gradual rise of the Tariff Reform movement that Mr. Alfred Harmsworth remarked, "It would not matter to Strachey if Mrs. Strachey were his only reader. He would go on sticking to his Free Trade policy in the *Spectator* as strongly as ever." And this is actually the case. On the other hand, if Mr. Chamberlain had been able to persuade him that

Tariff Reform would be for the benefit of the people of the country, even if he had been advocating the most extreme and academic policy of Free Trade the week before, nothing would have prevented St. Loe from turning straight round, giving at the same time a reasoned argument to his readers as to why the *Spectator* policy had changed. The two main principles in which he twice went right against the opinion of his Party were Home Rule and Free Trade. After our visit to Ulster in the autumn of 1890 he was so profoundly convinced of the impossibility of Northern Ireland being governed by a majority from Dublin that he never swerved in his opposition to any Home Rule which did not allow Ulster to contract out. The "Free State" and "Northern Ireland" have settled that matter between them, but there is by no means the same assurance as to Free Trade. The slogan of Tariff for Revenue only, which was adopted by St. Loe, is capable of many subtle modifications. Many years after, in that Centenary Number of the *Spectator*, to the production of which St. Loe had so greatly looked forward and which was to be produced without him, our surviving son John wrote :

"Unlike Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who went through at the same time so comparable a political evolution, my Father's Unionism, his detestation of Home Rule or any measure of Irish independence, did not modify his Free Trade in the slightest. With these two attitudes established, his political outlook, at any rate for the important part of his life, was fixed ; and fixed, as he often regretfully explained to me, in the most unfortunate way conceivable for his own political fortunes. The two things he cared most about in politics, namely Free Trade and the Union,

were championed respectively by opposite parties. Thus he could join neither of the two great parties in the nation, nor whole-heartedly oppose either. . . . Perhaps many people have forgotten that at the 1906 election the *Spectator* definitely advised its readers to vote Liberal. This was no doubt the boldest and most dramatic political move which my Father ever made."

John's further comment that his Father, had he gone into the House of Commons, would have been the despair of the Whips, is also wholly true.

The Free Trade campaign from 1903 to 1905 was to give the *Spectator* a position so powerful that Mr. Chamberlain considered it to be one of the great obstacles to his policy, and implored Mr. Alfred Harmsworth to start a rival which would neutralise its influence. Mr. Harmsworth told us that he had answered that, in the first place, Strachey was his friend, and, in the second, that it would be extraordinarily difficult for a new newspaper to approximate to the *Spectator* in the effect of its policy. For two years before 1902, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had wished to give up his post, and his staying on was merely a concession to Lord Salisbury. When, therefore, Lord Salisbury retired from the Premiership in July 1902, his Chancellor of the Exchequer retired with him, and Mr. Ritchie was appointed to the Treasury in his place. Now, Sir Michael had the year before imposed a duty of a shilling a quarter on corn, with the intention, as he stated, that it should add to the scope of indirect taxation. Mr. Ritchie in old days had been a "Fair Trader," but in his first Budget (April 1903) he repealed the Corn Tax and took fourpence off the Income Tax. It is tantalising to read the *Spectator*

comment that this remission was exceedingly useful, as "with the Income Tax below 1s. in the pound, the Chancellor of the Exchequer can always feel that he has room to turn round in," for in a bad year he can put on another penny on the Income Tax and be "thus relieved from the odious necessity of inventing a new tax. But if the Income Tax stands at a figure like 1s. 3d, it is practically impossible to increase it except in a great emergency." Comment from the wretched tax-payer of to-day is needless.

In the spring of 1903 Mr. Chamberlain had returned from a tour in South Africa, but at the date of Mr. Ritchie's Budget had not yet made his pronouncement on Imperial Preference, and the howl which was raised at the Chancellor of the Exchequer's action came chiefly from convinced Protectionists. Mr. Henry Chaplin, the Member for Dover, was well known in those days as the chief protagonist of pure Protection and headed the group in the House of Commons. The *Spectator* felt that not only was the principle of Food Taxes at stake, but that the repeal of the Corn Tax meant the removal of the only duty which could have been utilised in the interest of an Imperial Zollverein. The danger of this proved to be imminent. On Friday, May 15th, Mr. Balfour received a deputation protesting against the repeal of the Corn Tax, and informed them that the Government intended to stand firm ; while, by a curious coincidence, on the very same day Mr. Chamberlain at Birmingham made the memorable speech in which he first proclaimed his policy of Imperial Protection. " ' Tied-House ' Imperialism," said the *Spectator* in its first leading article, and from that day issue on the subject was joined. Very soon the statesmen were in effect beginning to count heads. The

Duke of Devonshire, together with that great ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Goschen, by that time Lord Goschen, led the case against Food Taxes in the House of Lords, while debate followed debate in the House of Commons. St. Loe wrote a great article at the end of June on the fallacy that the country was bleeding to death owing to its Free Trade policy. He pointed out that in the year 1880-1 each penny on the Income Tax produced £1,866,636, while in the year 1901-2 a penny addition produced £2,570,000.

In those days we all used to flock in July to Lady Jersey's garden parties at Osterley Park, and I well remember Mr. George Peel and St. Loe walking up and down the lawn and congratulating each other on the fact noted above, that Mr. Ritchie's repeal of the Corn Tax had deprived the Tariff Reform enemy of an exceedingly useful weapon.

It will readily be understood that St. Loe's correspondence with Lord Cromer just then dealt more largely with Free Trade than with anything else. In his official position Lord Cromer felt precluded from making any public announcement on the subject, but there exists a memorandum of his written on Mr. Chamberlain's two great speeches, one at Birmingham, one at Glasgow, which is full of sound Free Trade argument. Lord Cromer begins with a complaint that "to those of my age it is rather tiresome to be under the necessity of furbishing up their old and perhaps rather rusty economic armour in a cause which they had every reason to believe had, at all events in England, been fought and definitely won half a century ago." It may be doubted whether the cause is ever definitely won, for Free Trade is a matter of economic expediency, not of moral principle, and economic conditions

vary with every generation. St. Loe always said that in the end Protection would be brought in by the Radicals, as they were called in those days, and inclined at the end of his life to believe that it was the Labour Party which would introduce Tariffs ; but that is still a matter of political prophecy. In the autumn of 1903, Mr. Chamberlain began what was called a "raging, tearing propaganda" on behalf of "Tariff Reform," for it was then that that name was first introduced. In September, in order to leave his hands entirely free, he resigned from the Cabinet, and at the same time Mr. Ritchie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord George Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, both ardent Free Traders, also tendered their resignations. The situation was extremely curious. The two latter Ministers were unaware of Mr. Chamberlain's resignation, and they both alleged that they had been kept in ignorance of that vital fact till their own resignations had been accepted. The *Spectator* (October 3rd) comments : "We deal elsewhere very fully with the ethics of an episode which has unhappily justified the hardest things that have been said of the collusive character of Mr. Chamberlain's resignation. To borrow Mr. Balfour's observation on Cobden's attitude in regard to the French Treaty of 1860, 'the most complimentary epithet that I can imagine for a diplomatic transaction of that kind is that it was extremely dexterous.'"

Lord Cromer had warned St. Loe that he would not find in Sir Michael Hicks-Beach a pillar of strength for the Free Trade cause ; but this theory appeared to be wrong, because Sir Michael accepted the Presidency of the Unionist Free Food League. Yet a month or two afterwards the former Chancellor of the Exchequer announced

that, though a Free Trader, he was not against retaliation, and therefore saw no reason why he should not support a Government which had not gone further than to declare for retaliation, which curious "straddle" appeared entirely to justify Lord Cromer's opinion. The Duke of Devonshire, however, had early been informed by the Prime Minister of the resignation of Mr. Chamberlain, and therefore withheld his own. There is a detailed article in an early number of the *Spectator* of October which unravels the whole of the Cabinet intrigue. At the end of the same month certain of the Duke's old Free Trade friends wrote him a letter asking for a definite statement of his views, and the next week the Duke of Devonshire quitted the Cabinet, to which his devotion to the cause of Free Trade would have proved, to say the least of it, an embarrassment. The Prime Minister was exceedingly angry at what he called "a singular transformation," for the Duke had decided to remain with him as late as October 16th, and had been consulted as to the filling of vacancies, etc. Everybody knew that, although the Duke ostensibly gave as his ground a certain speech of the Prime Minister's at Sheffield, he had been shaken by the knowledge that the resignation of the other Free Traders had been made in ignorance of Mr. Chamberlain's action. Mr. Roosevelt wrote to St. Loe in February 1906, directly after the General Election :

"I was particularly interested in what you said about your own politics. Of course, I can only speak to you in the strictest confidence, and I may be guilty of indiscretion even thus. But I quite agree with you about Mr. Balfour. I thought that on free trade and protection he was trying to ride two horses. I have seen many politicians here at home sufficiently dexterous to succeed, at any rate for a

considerable time, under such circumstances ; but I have rarely seen such success tell for the good of the country ; and Mr. Balfour's great qualities do not prevent me from agreeing with what you say when you express the hope that democracy will always exact a heavy penalty from the statesman who will not speak out and give a clear lead. I have the heartiest sympathy with the Duke of Argyle's fondness for the leader who means what he says, and moreover means that what he says shall be understood. As for protection and free trade, I am confident that protection would be most damaging to Great Britain. As regards the United States, I think I once told you that I am on this point rather an economic agnostic. We have certainly prospered under protection, and I have seen the prophecies of the free-traders so utterly fail of fulfilment during the last thirty years that I am inclined to treat the matter as one of expediency purely.

“ I again agree with you about the labor members, and I am glad to see so strong a representation of the laboring classes. I confess to a feeling of envy that it is in England that we first see a labor man a member of the Cabinet. I would give much to have a labor man in my Cabinet. But it would be worse than useless to put one in who was not fit for the job, and there isn't any labor man here who stands in any way as John Burns stands with you. I have in my Cabinet, and I have in the highest positions in the Diplomatic service and in many other positions, men who were at one time laboring men, who toiled with their hands for wages ; but they have all long passed that stage. All that I mind about seeing so many labor members in Parliament is that I do not like to see any party based on class distinctions. I want the Representative to be not the Representative of a class but of all

classes. I do not want him to be primarily a labor man any more than I want him to be primarily a capitalist or a lawyer or a merchant.

"I am also interested in what you say of Edward Grey ; and somehow when you say that he is a Radical Whig you make me feel as if I could get on with him !

"We earnestly hope that you will both be over here next year."

The great ding-dong of Free Trade and Tariff Reform—the Protectionist inquiry being replied to by the Free Food League, the Women's Tariff Reform League by Mrs. Herbert Gladstone's Women's Free Trade Association—went on till the resignation of the Government at the end of the year 1905 brought matters to an issue.

Mr. Chamberlain in a speech at Bristol declared that, in his opinion, the Party should not abandon the strong, clear, fighting, forward policy in order to preserve its unity, whereupon the Unionist Press declared that the only thing left for Mr. Balfour to do was to resign. The King sent for Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who forthwith formed his Cabinet. The *Spectator* was naturally anxious about Home Rule, and on December 2nd stated that :

"Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman has told us that he remains a Home-ruler in the abstract, but since there was no possibility of the dissolution of the Legislative Union becoming a vital question for the next five or six years, it was very much better that the subject should not be discussed further on public platforms, and that all Free-traders, whether Home-rulers or Unionists, should concentrate their efforts on the great struggle which was before them."

The speeches of Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey further cleared the air on the subject, Sir Edward Grey stating that if a large Liberal majority were obtained at the next Election, it would be obtained on quite other issues than Home Rule, and in his opinion it would not be honest to use the votes of men in that way to reverse the Anti-Home Rule verdict given by the country in 1895 (*Annual Register*, 1905).

It will be remembered that in 1906 a General Election took about three weeks ; but even then the result was often decided by the returns of one special day. In this Election, which resulted in a landslide for the Conservative Party, there was one such decisive evening. Alfred Harmsworth, who after a short excursion into the baronetage, had just become Lord Northcliffe, asked us to dine and hear the returns sent in to him by telephone from the *Daily Mail* office. As far as I remember, it was Mr. Evelyn Wrench, the present editor of the *Spectator*, who recorded the returns as they came in. The party was very small, but included Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Spender, and St. Loe and I were much amused at finding that Lord Northcliffe's sense of drama and excitement at a great event made him apparently forget that the policy of his paper had lost in the great battle. Return after return came in—Liberal, Labour—strongholds of Conservatism falling to Free Trade, and at last the majority of the Liberals was assured and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Government was safe.

Just about a year before—in the spring of 1905—St. Loe had been asked to contest Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities in the Unionist Free Trade interests. It was a forlorn hope, because he was neither a Scotsman nor a doctor, and the sitting Member, Sir John Tuke, was both.

On January 13th Mr. Balfour was defeated at Manchester. What followed was described by me in a letter to Tom, who at that moment was in Germany :

"Your Father made up his mind that A. J. B. would be nominated instead of Tuke on Monday 15th (at Edinburgh), but nothing happened. Then came hints in the press that A. J. B. had intended to be nominated for a safe Scotch seat on Monday the 15th, but that the Unionist candidate had refused to retire ! Then last Saturday we heard the real true story. At one o'clock (the nomination was at two) Annandale (Tuke's Chairman) got a wire from the Central Conservative Offices saying 'Nominate A. J. B. for Edinburgh University.' What do you think he wired back ?—'Seat by no means safe. If Tuke wins it will be by the medical vote'—and so the fight of your Father's life was spoilt ! But of course, it's really very encouraging. And Annandale or one of his clerks tried to frighten Kerr by asking whether it was worth while for Mr. Strachey to go to the poll as Tuke had four thousand promises ! Now both these statements cannot be true, and we know that the telegram is true !"

Our polling came nearly a week after the result had been decided, and I told Tom in my next letter that the *Scotsman* said there could be no possible reason for anyone to vote against Tuke "because Free Trade is quite safe in this Parliament." I went on :

"It was an enormous pity our polling could not be earlier. Up to Wednesday morning about 3,500 voting papers had been returned for Sir William Turner to put in his safe. It is so absurd to treat parliamentary votes

like port wine and lay them down to mature. It is a very early Victorian election, and, though it may be picturesque, it is certainly irritating. . . . I say with the 3,500 votes polled, I feel like Napoleon at Marengo, when his general said, '*Trois heures, la bataille est perdue,*' and Napoleon answered, '*Trois heures, nous avons le temps de la gagner.*' "

But unfortunately, the parallel stopped there, for we did not gain the battle, St. Loe being most handsomely defeated by the postal vote of the doctors. And so ended his only appearance as a parliamentary candidate.

Mr. Arthur Lee, now Lord Lee of Fareham, who with his wife had been for several years great friends of ours, was among the few Conservatives who retained their seats, and he remarked that there would be room for him to lie down at full length on the Opposition benches.

As I have said above, Mr. Balfour having resigned in December 1905, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was forced to form his Cabinet before dissolving. This was considered to be a most astute piece of political manœuvring on the part of Mr. Balfour, and the *Spectator* commented that the probable cause of the so-called crisis was the "arrival of the only period in the year at which it was possible for a Prime Minister to say to the Opposition: 'I cannot go on, and I cannot dissolve, and therefore you must come in whether you like it or no.' . . . Granted Mr. Balfour's determination to resign and not dissolve, it was certainly a magnificent piece of tactics, and every student of political manœuvring will doubtless feel inclined to take off his hat to its author in wholehearted admiration."

The inner history of the formation of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Cabinet has lately been revealed to the world in Lord Haldane's autobiography, but I can testify to the alarm which the public felt, for rumours always reach the public, when they were told that Sir Edward Grey did not intend to accept office. What the public, however, never knew was the name of the person to whom the first offer of the Foreign Secretaryship had been made. In the following April Lord Cromer wrote to St. Loe :

" I do not think I ever told you—and I now tell you in strict confidence—that the first thing Campbell-Bannerman did, after having been charged by the King to form a Cabinet, was to offer me the Foreign Office. After very full consideration, I declined. I based my refusal on the ground of declining health—an explanation which was quite true and sufficient, so far as it went. But I do not mind telling you, privately, that there were two other considerations at the back of my head.

" The first of these was that I greatly feared that I should become responsible for socialist legislation, which would run counter to all my most cherished convictions. I am aware that this argument would hold equally good—indeed, perhaps it would be applied with greater force—to being associated with the other side. This is quite true. My reply is, that I would not be associated with *any* Government in legislation of this description, and, moreover, that in this connection I have but very little sympathy with either side. The only person who commands my respect in this connection is Morley. I have not always agreed with him ; far from it ; but I recognise that he has moral courage and that he holds fast to principle. It appears to me that most politicians of the present day,

on either side, are unable to see the wood by reason of the trees.

“ . . . On the whole, I have every reason to congratulate myself on my refusal. I believe that I shall be doing very much better work, in the interests both of the Empire and of civilisation in general, by continuing, for the few remaining years of my life, to govern Egypt.”

When he came to Newlands that summer, Lord Cromer talked of his decision, which he again assured us he did not regret. “ *Je cultive mon petit jardin,*” he said, “ and not so very *petit* after all.”

When, after the Election, Campbell-Bannerman's Cabinet took a firm grasp of the reins, it became obvious that he had got together a team of very remarkable men. Mr. Asquith was at the Treasury, Sir Edward Grey in charge of the Foreign Office. The appointment of Mr. Morley to the India Office was a surprise to many, while the acceptance of the War Office by his old friend, Mr. Haldane, ensured for St. Loe a sympathetic hearing when he made those experiments in helping to solve the problems of National Defence, the beginnings of which will be detailed in a later chapter.

We were in London during and after the General Election, having, as was our habit at that time, taken a furnished house from January to Whitsuntide. 1906 was the third year in which we had taken Lord Grey's house, 22, South Street—a house full of beautiful things and admirably adapted for the parties which, as usual, we delighted in giving. In a letter of mine to Tom I find an account of a party, much larger than usual, which we gave on February 12th, just before the opening of Parliament :

"Never did I see so many young M.P.'s. There were five or six Liberal ones, brand new from the Mint, and Leo Maxse looking much absorbed with Mr. Frederick Taylor, the Canadian (now Sir Frederick Taylor, Governor of the Bank of Montreal), in the middle of them. Then Tariff Reform received a great reinforcement, as Lord Morpeth and Jack Hills marched in together.

". . . There was a great question about leading the House between Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain, and a story went the rounds that Lord Northcliffe went to see Mr. Balfour and found him playing the piano. 'Come and see my Burne-Joneses,' quoth he airily. Northcliffe observed that he had exactly half an hour, and had come to talk politics ! Between ourselves, I should think Balfour would have much liked to have avoided talking politics to his newest peer."

In one aspect, from the point of view of the Women's Free Trade Association, the majority was almost too big—the Unionists suggested that, as Free Trade was safe, they had better retire in a body, which I thought a very bad plan ; so, as I wrote to Tom :

"In great fear and trembling as to what line he would take, I appealed to Cæsar, and he has come out all right on my side. I went to Lady Louisa Egerton, and got her to go straight to the Duke [of Devonshire], and he sends us a message that he hopes we will go on as before, and that if any ladies wish to resign, they will do so as individuals, and not *en bloc*—so I shall start the meeting (which is to be in my drawing-room) with this. Lady Louisa says that what the Duke *said* was, 'You'd better all stay in till you are kicked out !' "

But the earlier version was more suited to the consumption of this particular meeting.

The *Spectator* was destined to have many bitter controversies in the long years of office which lay before the Liberal Government. For the moment, however, with Home Rule in abeyance and Free Trade triumphant, St. Loe was more or less free to turn his attention to matters other than domestic politics. It was only a few months since the Treaty of Portsmouth had ended the Russo-Japanese War, while in India an administrative crisis of the first importance awaited the action of the new Government.

CHAPTER IV

TWO CRISES IN THE FAR EAST

I. CURZON IN INDIA

On taking office in the new Cabinet as Secretary of State for India in December 1905, John Morley found himself involved in an exceedingly delicate and difficult situation, which opened the whole question of the ultimate civilian control of military affairs in India.

Very shortly after Lord Kitchener's triumphant return from South Africa he had been appointed Commander-in-Chief in India at the express wish of the Viceroy, Lord Curzon. At the end of 1904 Lord Kitchener evolved a plan for the new distribution and partial re-organisation of the Indian Army, and in the spring of 1905 he raised the question as to the relations of the Commander-in-Chief and the Military Member of the Viceroy's Council. His contention was that his own position as Commander-in-Chief was impossible owing to the fact that a soldier, generally his subordinate in rank, occupied a place on the Viceroy's Council, from which he took his orders. Mr. Balfour's Ministry was still in being at that time, and Mr. Brodrick (now Lord Midleton), then Secretary of State for India, and the Home Government adopted a scheme the results of which in the opinion of Lord Curzon, would be independence of control for the Commander-in-Chief. There exists a complete correspondence between

Lord Cromer and St. Loe on the subject. Considering their joint views as to the necessity of the ultimate civilian control of military affairs, they, of course, both adopted the Curzon side of the controversy. In answer to a question of St. Loe's in a previous letter as to the constitution of the Viceroy's Council, Lord Cromer replied on May 3rd (1905) :

“ You ask ‘ whether the Indian Council rules like a Cabinet, or whether it is only a Council, where, in reality, the Viceroy's will is law ’ :

“ It is perhaps rather more a Cabinet than a Council, but it is in reality not quite either one or the other. Where it differs from a Cabinet is that power is, by Act of Parliament, vested in the Viceroy, which is not vested in the Prime Minister. Ilbert (*The Government of India*, p. 115—a book you should have) puts the case thus : ‘ If there is a difference of opinion in the Council, under ordinary circumstances the opinion of the majority prevails, but, under exceptional circumstances, the Governor-General has power to over-rule the Council.’ . . . Any member of the Council has a right to record his dissent from the opinion of his colleagues.”

After further elucidating the system, Lord Cromer proceeded :

“ The position between the two officials [i.e. the Military Member of Council and the Commander-in-Chief] concerned has always been a delicate one. Both must give and take.”

After seeing the Curzon-Kitchener correspondence Lord Cromer wrote to St. Loe as follows :

“ My views remain substantially unchanged. There is an administrative question to be put right, but the main thing is to devise a system which will permit of admittance into the Council of the Viceroy *always* of a military officer of Indian experience, of general Indian knowledge, and especially of knowledge of the native army.

“ I repeat my advice to be cautious till you know the facts. The matter is, in my opinion, one of *great* importance—not a mere question of military organisation.”

The scheme of the Home Government was such that, as the *Spectator* notes on August 26th, Lord Curzon resigned, and the Government at once accepted his resignation and appointed Lord Minto to the vacant post. At the end of June the Cromers had come to Newlands for a week-end, and, of course, discussed the question very fully. Later on Lord Cromer, who had gone to Scotland, wrote in no uncertain terms of the “ shove-up to militarism ” which the Government plan had given.

Although taking the anti-military side, the *Spectator* was profoundly disturbed by the publication of Lord Kitchener's Minute and Lord Curzon's reply to it, and said in a leading article on September 2nd :

“ We quite understand the provocation ; but both those great Officers of State ought to have remembered public interests, and to have endured the pain of being silent as they would have endured any personal misfortune.”

On September 28th Lord Curzon wrote a private and confidential letter as follows to the Editor of the *Spectator* :

“ Viceregal Lodge,

“ Simla.

“ *Sept. 28th, 1905.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I do not write this letter for publication. I am precluded by the position which I still hold from any such act. I may write it for your private information, and I do so because almost alone among the great English papers the *Spectator* has grasped the inwardness of the struggle in which I have been engaged, and has seen that I have fought and fallen for the first principle of civil government.

“ For that reason, perhaps, I am all the more distressed that you should do me even an obviously unconscious [in]justice.

“ In an article in your issue of Sep. 2 you blamed me equally with Lord Kitchener for the unfortunate and ill-judged publication of the latest papers. That blame was not deserved. Of course as Lord Kitchener had publicly challenged my statements which I knew to be scrupulously true, and then proceeded to impugn them line by line, it was my duty to substantiate them for the information of the S. of S. I did so, and proposed to Lord K. to send home both papers to the S. of S. to be dealt with as he pleased. I knew that in that case there wd. be no publication. Lord Kitchener refused and insisted on immediate publication. I represented his wish to the S. of S. with an expression of my own opinion that *in the public interest* publication ought not to take place, though I had no other objection. H.M.G. ignored my objection and yielded, as they have done at every stage in the controversy, to Lord Kitchener's insistence. The latter knew perfectly well that I was absolutely opposed to publication, but being unaware of the strength of my impending

reply, he could not resist the opportunity of gaining what he thought would be a public triumph.

“In India, where the working of our administrative system is known, the publication has inflicted most serious injury upon his reputation. You, however, are the only English paper that has apprehended the public importance of the controversy—deplorable as it was ; for you have seen that it was upon his plans as disclosed therein (and not repudiated by H.M.G.) that I resigned.

“Perhaps some time or other an opportunity may present itself to you for doing me justice.

“Yours faithfully,

“CURZON.”

The matter of responsibility for publication was accordingly put right in a first page note. Lord Curzon's correspondence with St. Loe took, of course, a much more intimate tone when the former realised that his old college friend was dealing with the subject personally.

1905 was the year in which the present King and Queen, then Prince and Princess of Wales, had undertaken a tour in India, and Lord Curzon had consented to stay on and meet both them and his successor, Lord Minto. He wrote to St. Loe on November 10th :

“Viceroy's Camp.

“*Nov. 10, 1905.*

“Private and Confidential.

“MY DEAR STRACHEY,—The fact that I am writing or trying to write in an Indian train must be my excuse for what will appear to be an almost disgraceful performance.

“I am greatly obliged for your letter and for the justice that you did me in a later number of the *Spectator* about the publication of these papers. Lord Cromer is now acquainted with the facts and I am stopping at Cairo on my way home to have a talk with him on the entire subject.

“In the meantime, however, I desire to suggest to you the desirability a little later on of making a strong Parly. effort to get this pernicious scheme defeated. If the Opposition are sound on the matter and raise it in a decent form when Parlt. meets, and if moreover even a fraction of the truth is then told (as I am prepared to tell it in confidence to you on my return), it seems to me impossible that the scheme should survive. Surely it would be better to kill it in the nest than to let the chicken hatch out and die of natural causes in a few years' time after the bulk of the harm is done.

“A crowd of Special Correspondents is now in India in connection with the Royal tour. What their Military predilections may be, I cannot say. But if only they keep their eyes and ears open in India and simply report to England the result, it is inconceivable that there should not be a great revulsion of opinion at home. For here opinion is quite unanimous, and almost my strongest support comes from the Army.

“I would suggest that action be postponed for the moment but that as soon as the probable attitude of the Liberal party has been determined and I have been able to consult with you, the question should be considered of moving actively in the matter. A bad system of Govt. in India is a dangerous thing, but a discontented Native Army (and that is the present situation) is worse. May we postpone till a later date the idea of any dinner to myself?

I am not anxious for any such demonstration, nor am I sure how far it wd. provide a suitable opportunity for airing the subject.

"I think I can suggest a better. In the meantime let me thank you for the generous suggestion.

"Yours sincerely,

"CURZON."

In December, as has been seen, came the resignation of Mr. Balfour's Government and the appointment by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman of Mr. John Morley to the India Office. Just after Christmas Mr. Morley wrote to St. Loe :

"Dec. 26, 1905.

"Flowermead,

"Wimbledon Park,

"S.W.

"DEAR MR. STRACHEY,—The *Spectator* has taken, and is taking, so strenuous a part in the Indian controversy, that I venture to write you a line.

"I have laboured hard at the arguments and the papers, and have had long talks with L^d. C. [Curzon], L^d. Roberts, Brodrick, and the men in the Indian Council. It is clear to me that the policy of the dispatch of May 31 was as wrong as possible. On the other hand it is clear that the old machinery of the Milv. Depart^{mt}. needed improvement ; and when L^d. Curzon accepted Brodrick's scheme, subject to his own modifications, he admitted as much. From that point I propose to take my departure ; and when the Gov^{mt}. of India send home the frame of their new Rules of Business for approval, I shall then have the proper occasion for considering the whole

position. Then will be the time for reconstituting a Military Department, and clipping the wings of the new War Dep^{mt}.

“ I have good reason to believe that L^d. Minto is persuaded already and definitely in our direction ; and I have no reason to doubt that I shall also be able to carry my own Council with me. Further, tho’ as yet I have not had time to receive letters from India—as I only came into office a fortnight ago—I understand that L^d. K. has surrendered the pretensions imputed to him at the time of L^d. Minto’s arrival.

“ The examination of the Rules of Business with its sequels will need care, but I am in good hopes that before the new Parliament assembles, the decisive dispatch will be ready and launched. I am assuming that I shall persuade the Cabinet—which is not to be doubted.

“ I am writing to you frankly, and in *strict confidence*. As you are the protagonist in the Press, I like you to understand the line on which I expect to get round any difficulties, for your private information.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ JOHN MORLEY.”

After this letter, Mr. Morley’s dispatch, published in February, was extremely disappointing. On February 10th, Lord Curzon wrote to St. Loe from Cannes as follows :

“ MY DEAR STRACHEY,—I am much obliged for your kind advice. I fear that it is too late. I have heard on the highest authority that Morley, after all his protestations, public and private, has decided to give way—in order, as he says, that there may be a lull in the controversy—i.e.,

that Brodrick's scheme is not to be reversed but to continue, and this although 4 out of the 8 present members of the Govt. of India are still opposed to it. A purely nominal sop is being thrown to them in the Dispatch which was *to issue to India yesterday* and is to be laid before Parl^t. on Feb. 19.

"My silence during the past 8 weeks has thus been purchased at the price of seeing this pernicious scheme ratified behind my back. A copy of my pamphlet *was* shown to Morley in confidence by Lyall.

"I am returning to London at the beginning of next week, when I shall have further information and will at once consult you as to the course to be taken. For here is a 'peg' with a vengeance, such as neither of us I expect ever contemplated.

"I am exceedingly sorry to see that your courageous fight was not attended with greater success. There is no man who better deserved a seat in the House of Commons than you.

"An amazing amount of finesse and intrigue seems still to be going on at Conservative head-quarters. Why cannot we get a clearer note?

"Yours sincerely,

"CURZON."

"Of course what I have written must be kept absolutely confidential for the present, being itself based on private information."

Mr. Morley himself was not satisfied, and wrote to St. Loe on February 25th, 1906 :

"DEAR MR. STRACHEY,—I venture to enclose you a paper that will interest you.

“Kindly regard it as strictly *secret*, and not to be allowed out of your own hands ; and please return here.

“To-morrow you will see my decision about the Army system. It is not satisfactory, but ’t is the best I could do with L^d. M., L^d. K., and my own council here adverse to restriction or quasi-restriction. As it stands, I overrule L^d. M. and L^d. K. on the cardinal point of the Secretary. On the other hand L^d. K. has his way against the old Military Departm^t. If L^d. Curzon had been a trifle steadier and less impulsive last summer, he might easily have won.

“L^d. K. has only 21 more months to run, and I think we can prevent much mischief.

“I am very sorry you missed your election. But to miss a parliamentary election for a man with other channels of influence and power may well be a blessing in disguise.

“Yours sincerely,

“JOHN MORLEY.”

And further on February 27th :

“DEAR MR. STRACHEY,—Thank you for the return of the paper, and for your letter.

“On the matter of *hurrying*, I mean to write strongly to L^d. M. to keep his eyes open, as in all other matters in which L^d. K. has objectionable idiosyncrasies.

“You do not think more dubiously of the plan than I do—not a bit. I expect the skies may soon darken between L^d. K. and me on more serious things than army rules of business. So perhaps the sunset end of this transaction will put me in a good position for change of weather.

“Yours sincerely,

“JOHN MORLEY.”

Lord Cromer comments in a letter dated March 1908 :

“ It is quite impossible not to contrast what Morley has actually done, with the language which he certainly would have used if—as I understand was his intention, had the late Government not gone out—he had brought forward the matter in the House of Commons as a member of the Opposition.”

The effect of the practical restrictions of the functions of the Military Member of the Viceroy's Council to the Military Supply Department was that in eighteen months' time (June 1907) Mr. Morley questioned the usefulness of the whole Supply Department. In 1909 the Department was suppressed in the course of Mr. Morley's Indian Council Bill. Lord Cromer wrote to St. Loe on the subject on January 30th, 1909 :

“ As you know, I held at the time that Curzon was quite right, and nothing struck me more than the fact that so few of the people who took part in the controversy seemed to attach any importance to the point which I thought was by far the most important of all the considerations brought forward, namely, that it was quite essential to have on the Viceroy's Council somebody who had served in the native army, and was in touch with native army feeling. This a Commander-in-Chief nominated in England, and with purely English experience, cannot possibly be. We were told, however, at the time, that although the functions of the military member of Council would be modified, at the same time he would still be there, and that therefore this criticism was, to a certain extent, answered. Now it would appear that the next and inevitable

step is about to be taken, and that the Military Supply Member of Council is to be abolished on the ground, I presume, that he is, from a departmental point of view, of no use—a ground which, on its own merits, I conceive to be perfectly sound, but which only shows how very right those who objected to the original change were.”

The abolition of the Military Supply Member of Council, recommended partly on the ground that a vacancy was required on the Council for the appointment of a native member, resulted in the whole Military Supply Department being again under the Commander-in-Chief—a system which, as Lord Ronaldshay points out in his *Life of Curzon*, broke down under the strain of war, and the Committee of 1919 by a majority recommended the resuscitation of the Supply Department in order to relieve the Commander-in-Chief. An extract from a letter of Lord Cromer on April 3rd, 1906, may fitly close this short outline of the crisis.

“ I have never been one of those who entertained the general opinion that India was a model administration. On the contrary, the more I have lived in the East, the more have I been convinced that in many respects, notably in matters connected with education, India furnished an object-lesson in what should be avoided. Whilst, on the one hand, verbal assent has been given to the principle of low taxation, in practice, under the influence of the military party and ill-informed British public opinion, we have constantly been diverging from that principle, and spending money on objects in which the people of India are very little interested. As to education, we have created a superficially educated upper class.

We allow a free Press and teach the natives all the procedure common to agitators in England and elsewhere, and we have done absolutely nothing towards furnishing an antidote, in the way of raising the general level of education throughout the country, in order in some degree to balance the influence of the agitator.

“We are now, therefore, merely reaping the fruits, having ourselves sown the seed. I shall be very curious to see how Morley deals with the whole situation. My own belief is that the natives of India are not as yet in any way fit for self-government ; but it is impossible to put back the hands of the clock ; and I think that some moderate steps in a liberal direction have become almost inevitable. In the meanwhile, here, I am taking to heart the lesson of India ; that is to say, without discouraging higher education, I am doing all I can to push forward both elementary and technical education. I want all the next generation of Egyptians to be able to read and write. Also, I want to create as many carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, etc., as I possibly can. More than this I cannot do. One of the difficulties in dealing with educational questions is that Government officials and the public generally take so much more interest in some measure which produces immediate fruits. I conceive that a gardener is more interested in planting an annual than in planting an acorn. The former will come up in three months, and the latter will take fifty years to grow ; but the acorn will assuredly grow in time, and when the tree has grown, only two things are possible : one is, to let it go on growing, and the other is to cut it down with an axe. Now in politics the use of the axe is a very rough and ready measure, which is not to be commended save to remedy an extreme situation.”

II. ROOSEVELT ON JAPAN

In the same years, 1904-5, Great Britain was, of course, watching with considerable anxiety the outcome of the Russo-Japanese War, which had broken out early in 1904. In October of this year, indeed, there seemed for a moment grave danger that the part of this country would not be only that of an onlooker, for the Russian Baltic Fleet, steaming out to the Far East, opened fire on a fishing fleet of English trawlers off the Dogger Bank. It is impossible to describe the excitement caused by this extraordinary outrage ; but the Government, backed up by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as the leader of the Opposition, kept their heads, and, instead of ordering out the Fleet to demand explanation or satisfaction direct from the Russian Baltic Fleet, expressed their views to St. Petersburg. The *Spectator* of the next week, November 5th, quoted from the *Manchester Guardian* a letter sent by an officer of the Russian Fleet confessing that men and officers alike were intoxicated, that everyone knew they were out of their course, and that there were great fears that they would run aground. In this confusion they saw what they believed to be a flotilla of torpedo-boats, but which in reality were British fishing vessels, and later on in the excitement the Russian ships fired at each other. The Russian Government agreed to leave behind the officers responsible and to take adequate action in regard to their punishment, if an impartial investigating body should pronounce them guilty.

On the first day of the new year, 1905, Port Arthur, after a defence by the Russians of eight months, fell to a furious assault by the Japanese, and from that moment the issue of the war was hardly in doubt ; but it was not till the

summer that actual negotiations for peace were undertaken. In the early spring the Japanese defeated the Russians in the decisive battle of Mukden ; but in April Admiral Rozhdestvensky arrived with the ships which had led to the Dogger Bank incident five months before. At the end of May Admiral Togo practically annihilated the Russian Fleet. The whole of Europe was loud in declaring that Russia should make peace in consequence of this great disaster, and on June 10th the *Spectator*, in a first-page note, stated, "The Russian Government, it is said, has asked President Roosevelt to enquire of Tokio what terms would satisfy the Japanese." The facts, however, were otherwise. On the 8th the President had forwarded both to St. Petersburg and Tokio a dispatch suggesting that "the time had arrived when, 'in the interest of the whole civilised world,' the belligerents should place themselves in direct communication with each other in order to see if their plenipotentiaries or delegates could not open negotiations for peace." After lengthy *pour-parlers*, a Peace Conference held its first meeting at Portsmouth, in New Hampshire, in the first days of August.

A month of negotiations followed, in which the Russian delegates proved themselves exceedingly difficult to deal with ; but in the first days of September the Treaty of Portsmouth was at last signed. President Roosevelt wrote to St. Loe on September 11th, 1905 :

"As you can imagine, I had my hands full during the close of the Portsmouth conference, when it became evident that there would be a deadlock unless active measures were taken. It was one of those curious cases where it was for the real interest of each side to make peace, even though the other side got just a trifle more

than it was entitled to. Russia's giving up of the southern half of Saghalin was entirely genuine. I only got it through repeated personal interviews of Meyer with the Czar, when he could not only read him my letters and telegrams but insist upon his understanding them, instead of allowing him to repeat some formula which Lamsdorff or one of the Grand Dukes had told him. It was only through the Czar himself that we finally got it conceded to Japan. This, with what the Japanese had actually obtained in Corea and Manchuria, represented the essentials which the Japanese *had* to have. I had all along felt that they were very foolish to try to get a dollar of indemnity, if it meant a continuance of the war. As I think I wrote you, I could understand their continuing the war at no matter what cost of national exhaustion, if they felt it was vital to drive Russia out of East Asia and permanently to take possession of East Siberia. But I found that they did not really want East Siberia ; that they were beginning to feel the heavy financial drain of the war ; and that the leading soldiers, no less than the leading statesmen, realized that as they got further away from the coast their difficulties would increase, and that to take Harbin and Vladivostok might well mean to incur greater losses and run greater hazards than had been incurred in taking Port Arthur and Mukden. The northern half of Saghalin they had not, as a matter of fact, I found, reduced to possession, and did not really want, provided they could get the fishery rights. The only difficulty came from their having, as I think unwisely, allowed the Japanese people as a whole to indulge in utterly extravagant anticipations as to what could be obtained, until they really thought they could get as much as if their armies occupied Moscow. When the crisis came their Government

showed wisdom, courtesy and self-restraint in a way that put them at a great advantage when compared with their Russian competitors.

“As you know, I am not in the least a peace-at-any-price man, and I have the heartiest scorn for those people, to be found in both countries, who, whether from folly, from selfishness, from short-sightedness, or from sheer cowardice, rail at the manly virtues and fail to understand that righteousness is to be put before peace even when, as sometimes happens, righteousness means war. But I have grown to feel an increasing horror for pointless, and of course still more for unjust war. A continuance of this struggle was of course utterly pointless and meant hideous slaughter of gallant men to no purpose, aside from the waste and exhaustion of the peoples involved. I rejoice, as you did, at the peace.

“Now I hope that Russia will move, no matter how sluggishly and haltingly, forward on the path of self-government. Of course she is cursed almost as much by her reformers as by her oppressors. Tolstoi's last articles really do not rise to the dignity of drivel, and people whose purpose is mere aimless destruction can not be anything but a curse. If the peace negotiations give Witte, no matter how undeservedly, prominence in his own country, good will have come ; for although his frank rejection of ethical considerations is to me appalling, still he does see that Russia cannot take a great place in the Twentieth Century if she adheres to the spirit and the methods of Ivan the Terrible.

“As for Japan, all I can do to help her will be done. It may be that we shall have trouble with her, and the attacks by the Tokio mob on foreigners and Christians have an ominous side and tend to reconcile me to her

failure to get a great sum of money and to her being left face to face with Russia in Siberia, especially as the Anglo-Japanese alliance really guarantees her against any offensive return by Russia. But for all that and in spite of my realization that she may show herself at times as unpleasant a neighbor as all European and American powers have at times shown *themselves* to be, I yet admire and believe in the Japanese and feel that their advent into the circle of great civilized powers is a good thing. If we of America keep our navy at a high point of efficiency and at the same time treat the Japs with real courtesy and friendliness, we shall have no trouble with them—nor yet with any of the powers of continental Europe ! (I regard all danger of any trouble between the United States and Great Britain as over, I think forever.) This is only another way of saying that every free people should strive to combine ability to defend its own rights with hearty regard for the rights of others.”

CHAPTER V

THE "COUNTY GENTLEMAN"

SOME time after Mr. Max O'Rell had published his celebrated volume, *John Bull et Son Île*, Mr. Bernard Shaw exploited the French author's title by christening his Irish play *John Bull's Other Island*. Copying these distinguished models, I feel inclined to head this chapter, *Strachey's Other Weekly*, for early in December, 1901 he bought an illustrated paper entitled the *County Gentleman*. It was a case of propinquity. The *County Gentleman's* office was at No. 3, Wellington Street and, the numbers going unevenly, this was next door to No. 1. St. Loe could not bear to pass the window day after day of a newspaper in the making of which he had no hand, and finally he entered into negotiations with the proprietors and bought it. I think also that his nostalgia for the country had much to do with the purchase. He thought it would be delightful to own and direct a paper dealing entirely with out-of-door life. But the audience of the *County Gentleman* were accustomed, not to country, but to "county" pursuits, and these are not nearly so amusing to the general public. Also county life was just beginning to disappear out of England, and added to this, the diminishing band of "county gentlemen" had already provision for their weekly reading in the pages of the *Field*. Mr. Eric Parker, now Sporting Editor of the *Field*, accepted the editorship, and there were several very distinguished contributors whose articles

appeared regularly—notably Mr. C. J. Cornish, whose papers on natural history, etc., had for some time been a delightful feature of the *Spectator*, and Mr. Robertson Scott, whose pseudonym “Home Counties” is still so well known.

Besides these writers, the whole family was commanded to help in the production of the new venture, and Harry Strachey made for the cover a charming drawing of a country-house remarkably like the south front of Sutton Court, with an imaginary river running through the grounds. I had enormous fun, for I was let loose on two series of articles. One series was on Gardening, and the other the type of general article which some journalists call “Middles,” and which we in the *Spectator* used to call “Sub-leaders.” The nineties being the days of pseudonyms, I adopted as my own the title of Maria Edgeworth’s entertaining story, *L’Amie Inconnue*. This, an old friend of ours, who guessed the secret, insisted should rather have been “Amy Known.” When I got tired of my “Middles,” I was allowed to compile a series on “The Mechanism of Country-house Entertaining,” in which I varied my pseudonym to “A Country Hostess.” Later, in 1904, I went back to *L’Amie Inconnue* for three series of articles, one on the “Seven Ages of Women,” the others on the “Women of Shakespeare.” “A Country Hostess” had the most success. I was asked to re-publish the articles, but with so many provisos as to re-writing them from a different standpoint that I refused the offer. Thus, from the beginning of the century onwards for some years my field of journalistic activity was the *County Gentleman*, short notices of novels in the *Spectator*, and a little reviewing for the *Manchester Guardian*.

The new paper was illustrated and the reproduction

good ; and early in the century the enterprising manager, Mr. Percy Burton, introduced to St. Loe by Mr. Harmsworth, had suggested a fashion supplement as a good feature for the paper, the cover of which by this time had turned from white to bright green. I must say that, looking through the volume of 1904, the pictures of women's costumes are of so terrible a nature that, till I had assured myself in the pages of *Punch* that more graceful garments were also worn, I felt inclined to reverse all I had said about women's dress in the nineties. Not less ridiculous, however, are the pictures of the early motor-cars, the lines of which were then just about to evolve from the hideous tonneau which had been the first manifestation of the four-seater car. The light cars are depicted as so high that it would seem that the object of the passengers was to look over the tops of the hedges, and the illustrations of veils and goggles speak volumes as to the dustiness of the roads. However, at the time that they appeared they were, of course, thoroughly up-to-date and part of the necessary equipment of a country-house paper.

But, in spite of the excellence of the matter and illustrations of the *County Gentleman*, the paper was never financially a success. It provided, however, a most useful pulpit from which St. Loe could preach and cause to be preached his theories as to those problems of domestic politics for which there was not room in the *Spectator*.

The highwater mark in the *County Gentleman* was the opening in July 1905 of the Cheap Cottages Exhibition. During the winter of 1904-5 a series of articles had appeared, many by "Home Counties," on the problem of housing in the country. St. Loe had written a preparatory paper, in which he pointed out that, while the ordinary cottage cost at least £250 to build and probably

more, the rent which could be obtained for it from the agricultural labourer was only about 5s. a week. As he gives the ordinary wage of the labourer as being on an average 14s. to 16s., a proportion sum will reveal the fact that the problem is financially not much more acute now than it was then. "Home Counties" laid out the absolute requirements as a kitchen-living-room, a scullery and pantry, three bed-rooms, a coal-shed and an earth closet—a bath-room, it will be seen, not being mentioned and a parlour being negatived in favour of a big living-room and large scullery, where most of the cooking could be carried on. Suggestions were poured in upon the *County Gentleman*, and an exhibition of models was proposed. I remember long conversations with St. Loe, chiefly out walking, in which he lamented the necessity of the models being probably on a small scale ; but a better plan was to come. Early in December a letter was received at the *County Gentleman's* office from the Garden City Company at Letchworth, proposing that the Exhibition should consist of real cottages erected on their ground at Letchworth, and stating that the Company would be prepared to guarantee tenants for all cottages, the plans of which had been approved, at rents showing a return of not less than six per cent. on the certified cost of erection, this cost of erection to be fixed at the opening of the Exhibition. A strong national committee was at once formed to carry this project into effect, and the first list of sympathisers and patrons included the varied personalities of Lord Grey (Governor-General of Canada), Mr. W. H. Lever, Mr. Will Crooks (the well-known boiler-maker M.P. for Woolwich) and Sir Alfred Harmsworth. Later the list of patrons became indeed imposing, being headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Dukes of Devonshire and

Bedford, and including not only all the great landlords of England, but other persons of distinction, such as Mr. Sidney Buxton, Mr. Rider Haggard, Mr. Arthur Lee, Sir Horace Plunkett, Mr. Rudyard Kipling and Mr. H. G. Wells (one would imagine that this was one of the very few occasions on which these last two names appeared in the same list !).

I have never visited so delightful an Exhibition as that which was opened at Letchworth on July 25th, 1905. There they stood, streets of charming little cottages, which many enterprising firms had furnished, and in which every sort of amusing experiment in decoration had been tried. In spite of the inconvenience of getting to Letchworth from Surrey, I, who am an amateur of houses, paid countless visits to Letchworth and saw myself, in imagination, living the simple life with St. Loe in many an attractive living-room, our long-legged children miraculously become small again. The Exhibition consisted of nearly a hundred cottages, and the organisation of the whole matter had been no small task. Before the end of the year, our friend and neighbour, Mr. Wilbraham Cooper, had undertaken the Honorary Secretaryship of the Committee, and I am very proud to think that it was my suggestion which provided them with so able a coadjutor. St. Loe always told me that Mr. Cooper was the perfect secretary. He settled all details, but whenever a matter of policy had to be decided he put it before the Committee so carefully prepared that a decision could be quickly arrived at. The fund for prizes, etc., which was collected by the Committee amounted in the end to over £1,000.

The day of the opening by the Duke of Devonshire was not without its emotions. St. Loe has given a brief account of it in *The Adventure of Living*, which will perhaps

bear enlarging. I went down early, leaving St. Loe to follow with the "Swells" in the afternoon. Mr. Cooper was to meet me at lunch in the refreshment tent, and he came in saying, "The Duchess is coming after all, and we have no bouquet." However, we furbished up some particularly smart copies of the *Book of the Cheap Cottages Exhibition* and prepared to receive the company. We were all, of course, complimenting the Garden City Company on their public spirit in offering a free site for the Exhibition, but one of the first things the Duke said to the Chairman, and he said it very loud, was "Jolly good advertisement this is for your Garden City, isn't it?" The Duchess, whom everybody seemed to think was going to be very formidable, was exceedingly kind and much interested—too much, in fact, for she and the Duke insisted on my taking them (I don't know where St. Loe had got to) up and down the stairs in some of the smallest of the cottages exhibited. I was in agonies lest they should either stick or slip, and on one occasion the Duke, in the middle of a very small bed-room, observed that what was wanted now was a whole lot of school-children who would jump on the floors and see if they were safe. He then proceeded to stamp himself—and he was no lightweight—but the flooring resisted nobly. We used two of the new processes at Newlands, one of them a patent oak panelling, which to this day looks extremely nice in the little drawing-room of our old house, and the other a system of concrete blocks. These blocks were made on the spot by a machine which was capable of turning them out at the rate of 150 a day. As far as I remember, the price for two semi-detached cottages erected on the landlord's own site was £300. We at once had a pair built in a field at Newlands, which, with their plain outlines and red roofs, some irreverent

person said looked exactly like the pictures of the home of "W. Rabbit, Esq." in *Alice in Wonderland*. To this day the houses are known and put down in rating assessment lists of cottages as "The Rabbit Cottages."

The adventure of the Cheap Cottages Exhibition remains one of the most pleasant memories of my life. I was not alone in feeling the charm of these streets of houses standing empty and waiting for life to come to them. "Home Counties" went to the Exhibition on the eve of the opening, while the blows of the last workmen's hammers were still resounding through the evening air. He ends a delightful description of his visit with these words : "I like to think of my last view of the cottages, *our* cottages, as I returned to the station. Dusk was not far off, but the open-faced workmen still laboured with a will. Above them some late lark singing. Beside them the waving corn. Which sight was goodliest I know not now."

CHAPTER VI

“ST. LOE FOR MERRY ENGLAND!”

(*Punch's Almanack*, 1904)

IN his Almanack for 1904 Mr. Punch selected an Academy of All the Talents of his very own. This he said should :

“extend a welcome of equal warmth to the athlete and to the author, to the journalist and the statesman. Once this principle was established, it did not take the shrewd eyes of the Sage long to pick out his two score Immortals. Nor was he long in selecting his President.”

This President was Lord Rosebery. Each of Mr. Punch's Immortals then proceeded to deliver an address, the President stating that the meeting which was being held should be “a carnival of mutual admiration,” in which every member of the Academy should deliver a panegyric on a contemporary whose name should be selected by the arbitrament of the hat. Mr. Balfour first drew Mr. Paul Cinquevalli, and there is a charming picture of him identifying himself with his theme. When it came to the turn of the Editor of the *Spectator*, it is stated that he refused to draw until he was assured that (1) the hat had paid no duty, (2) it was made in Germany and had been “dumped” here, and (3) did not belong to a Protectionist. Inserting his hand, Mr. St. Loe Strachey then

read aloud the name of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and plunged swiftly into his speech. The picture, which bore the title, “St. Loe for Merry England!” is a life-like representation of St. Loe in full khaki uniform, obviously at the head of his Rifle Clubs and accompanied by a dog, whom we shrewdly suspected to be one of those intelligent quadrupeds who had been found in the correspondence columns of the *Spectator*, but who was announced as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s “phosphorescent dog,” “The Hound of the Baskervilles.”

“If we are to be secure against invasion,” said the Editor of the *Spectator*, “a peril now brought infinitely nearer by Mr. Chamberlain’s disastrous crusade, we must have a citizen army.” But that did not exhaust the patriotic necessities.

“Unless and until an Englishman possesses a dog, or, failing that, unless and until he has contributed a dog story to the columns of the *Spectator*, he cannot be admitted to have reached the full stature of his manhood, i.e. to be worthy of enrolment in a rifle club. Now Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has not only fulfilled this cardinal requisite of citizenship, but he has gone further. He has, by his marvellous invention of a phosphorescent dog, not only established his claim to be ranked in the same category with Edison and Röntgen, but he has immensely enhanced the strength, both offensive and defensive, of the British army. We, that is, I, am credibly informed that a handful of men armed with slouch hats, Mauser pistols and one well-trained phosphorescent dog, are capable of resisting a whole army corps.”

The speech was greatly enjoyed both at Newlands Corner and at 1, Wellington Street, and I liked the picture

so much that St. Loe bought the original sketch and gave it me. It is, of course, a caricature, but the artist has nevertheless caught some of the essential quality of his subject.

It should, perhaps, be explained that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at that time lived at Haslemere, and Haslemere and Newlands Corner were competing for the honour of having started the first Morris tube Rifle Club. St. Loe's ambition for these clubs soared above mere marksmanship. In August 1902 he conducted the first experiment in using members of Village Rifle Clubs for purposes of defence. The clubs had mostly come into existence during the summer of 1901, and the four neighbouring clubs, Albury, Merrow, Newlands and Shere, numbered nearly two hundred members, of whom over half took part in the experiment. The enemy was composed of fifty cyclists of the First V.B. Hampshire Regiment, and the Rifle Clubs were to hold Newlands Corner against the Volunteers, who would arrive from Chobham and Woking, which towns sections of the invading force were supposed to have reached. An old friend, Capt. the Master of Ruthven (now General Lord Ruthven), of the Scots Guards, was kind enough to command the Rifle Clubs. He divided the defending forces into four sections, with a unit of cyclists, and these sections were under the command of various Volunteers, one, at any rate, of whom had seen service in South Africa. I think Tom acted as a dispatch-rider on his bicycle. Luckily it was fine, and the day was a great success—so great that two years later the experiment was repeated, with an interesting difference.

Of all the delightful days we have ever had at Newlands, I think the most delightful was the Rifle Club Field Day on August 1st, 1904. Colonel Sturmeay Cave of the First V. B. Hampshire Regiment had acted as Umpire in

1902, and had said at the pow-wow at that date that he was anxious to see whether the civilian Rifle Clubs could take the offensive “and generally remain a coherent force, while they ranged the country, instead of digging their graves in the chalk, as they have done to-day.” The scheme was that the enemy, composed again of the Hampshire Regiment, some of the Queen’s Westminsters and others, were trying to take a convoy from Leith Hill towards Woking, where the headquarters of the invading army were established. No regular troops could be spared, and the task of destroying the convoy was to be undertaken by the Rifle Clubs, now expanded to include—besides Newlands, Merrow, Albury and Shere—Guildford, Wotton, Byfleet, Epsom, Dorking and Sutton Place. St. Loe drew up the scheme, and the Master of Ruthven again supervised matters. The men assembled very early in the morning, and the combined Guildford, Newlands and Merrow command sneaked up Leith Hill and surprised the enemy just moving off after breaking camp. But, alas ! the umpires held that, the attacking force only numbering a hundred men, while the body they attacked was over two hundred strong, the attack had not succeeded, and the Rifle Club men were ordered to fall back. After that the amateurs lost touch, for apparently reliable rumours came in from every quarter of the globe that the convoy had been seen. As the *Spectator* the next Saturday remarked, “If the riflemen learnt nothing else, they learnt the bitter meaning of ‘the fog of war.’” But, though the umpires had ruled that the Rifle Clubs must retire for a considerable distance whilst the convoy got peacefully away, they yet had a most interesting and instructive day and proved that even a push-bike cyclist could emphatically become mobile.

The third great day of the Rifle Clubs, in 1906, was on a smaller scale, for Mr. Haldane, then Secretary of State for War, promised to come down to see what was going on. He could not spare much time, so that only two hours on the afternoon of Saturday, July 21st, were available for the operations. We had an interesting party in the house to see the experiment, Mr. Haldane, the Cromers, Sir Hugh and Lady Bell, while Colonel Cubitt (now Lord Ashcombe), Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, came over for the afternoon. The enemy force was to consist of a company of the Second V. B. Queen's Royal West Surrey and two companies of the ancient foe—the First V. B. Hampshire Regiment, with a force of about eighty cyclists, divided into two groups. The Rifle Clubs, assembled as usual at Newlands Corner, were inspected by Mr. Haldane, and took up positions on the Clandon Downs at 5.30, for it was known that the attack would develop from Guildford and Woking. St. Loe himself was in command, and, as everybody else was busy, it fell to me to guide Mr. Haldane round the positions. I remember his interest in the small groups hidden in the bracken just where the Merrow Road divides the Merrow and the Clandon Downs. When the noses of the rifles had disclosed the presence of a larger group than usual, an animated conversation ensued between the Secretary of State and the churchwarden of Merrow, who was, I think, in command of that detachment. It is curious, with later knowledge, to read that the cyclists were judged to be much more efficient than the cars. "The attempt to carry out a reconnaissance with motor-cars was foredoomed to failure from the first. It was found that a car cannot turn round rapidly on the road, and will, therefore, fall an easy prey to the hostile cyclists." So wrote "*Nunquam non Paratus*" in an account

of the day which came out in the *Spectator* on the following Saturday (July 28th). In the same letter it appeared that one of the commands had somehow or other got hold of a gun, which the “officer commanding artillery” used to great purpose. Mr. Haldane, in the pow-wow which followed, said that “the real lesson of the operations was the need for organisation. . . . It had always been the fashion to speak of the Regulars as if they only needed a great deal of training and a great deal of organisation, and then to talk of the Auxiliary Forces as if they should (as, indeed, they have) grow up like mushrooms, haphazard.”

The organisers of the Rifle Clubs hoped that the members would join up in their own territorial regiments in case of crisis. They had had the advantage of learning to shoot, and many of them had been handled in manœuvre field days. It was, of course, never contemplated that the Rifle Clubs should take the field as units.

It must be clearly understood that the policy for which the *Spectator* stood was merely that of adequate defence against any attempt at the invasion of this country, and the volunteer efforts in which St. Loe interested himself were, like the Red Cross schemes of a year or two later, directed merely against invasion. It was quite obvious that Great Britain did not require a large standing army. It was equally obvious that, with her commitments abroad, the Regular Army was not sufficient for home defence. When, therefore, in September 1905, Colonel Pollock contributed a letter to the *Spectator* saying that he would undertake to train a company of recruits for six months and turn them out equal to dealing with Continental troops, the Editor was at once bitten by the idea. Colonel Pollock’s undertaking was as follows. He would

train a hundred recruits and produce in six months the following results :

“(1) The recruits shall be as good at drill, at gymnastics and at musketry as any Regular of the same length of service ; (2) on a tactical exercise the recruits shall show themselves tactically more proficient than any company selected from any battalion of the Regular Army serving in the United Kingdom, provided that the Company chosen to represent the Regular Army shall not be selected more than forty-eight hours before the trial takes place.”

Here was the germ of the idea which was to take shape in the next spring in the “*Spectator* Experimental Company.” The first problem was one of finance, and this was an anxious subject. A subscription list was opened in the paper and generously supported. The experiment was timed to begin in March, and I remember that, in spite of a generous donation of £1,000 from the Duke of Bedford, St. Loe, towards the end of February, became a little anxious as to the money. The first estimate of £3,500 had proved a little too close ; but a second donation of £1,000, this time from Mr. Waldorf Astor, brought the fund to well over £4,000. On March 10th, 1906, St. Loe wrote to Mr. Roosevelt describing the experiment as follows :

“Colonel Pollock, who is a very keen and able regimental officer on half pay, is going to train a company of 100 men, enlisted under a civil contract, for six months under a system of what one might call intensive training. . . . His system is one of individual training and will be carried so far that at the end of six months he declares that every private will have been trained to do the work of the

sergeant and even to take command, if necessary, of the company. That is, he is prepared to assume all the officers and sergeants killed and that the company has to be run by privates taken at random from the ranks. . . . After the six months training, I propose that our Militiaman should only be called upon to do one week's camp in the year and some shooting and drill in his spare time, evenings or Saturday afternoons. This will enable thousands of men to join the Militia who would now like to do so but who cannot because of the month's annual training, which makes the men incapable of taking many civil posts.”

The training began in March 1906 at Hounslow, and we were all, of course, keenly interested, especially Tom, who on leaving Eton had gone to Germany to learn German and had come back for an Easter vacation. The Army Council lent arms and accoutrements, barrack accommodation and a drill ground at Hounslow, and by the beginning of the month Colonel Pollock had had sufficient applications to fill several companies. The whole hundred assembled at Hounslow Barracks on Thursday, March 15th. By the 24th the training was in full swing, and throughout the summer the experiment excited great interest in all who cared for the defence of the country, from the Secretary of State for War downwards. Amongst other people who went to Hounslow in April was Mr. John Burns, then President of the Local Government Board, who highly approved of all that was being done. St. Loe comments in a letter to Lord Cromer, “It is curious, though so many members of the Cabinet know about the scheme and are mildly interested in it, that he, who on the surface one would suppose to be the least military of ministers, was the first to go down and look at the thing

for himself. Colonel Pollock only discovered him by accident sitting out on Hounslow Heath reading a newspaper and watching the men at their work."

As Hounslow is very near Windsor, Colonel Pollock wrote to the proper authorities to ask whether the men might march over some day and see the State Apartments in the Castle. Lord Esher telegraphed, "If you will make it Tuesday, the King will be very glad to inspect the Company." St. Loe wrote to Lord Esher asking whether it was meant that he himself was to go, and I had an amusing little experience as to Lord Esher's reply. That year (1906) we had taken Lord Grey's house, 22, South Street, where there were telephones—instruments to which we were not very much accustomed. One afternoon, when St. Loe was out, the telephone bell rang. I answered and a courteous voice asked me if St. Loe were at home. I said "No." My unknown interlocutor asked if I were Mrs. Strachey, and then proceeded to state that he was Lord Esher, that he had received St. Loe's letter, and that St. Loe was to go to Windsor with the *Spectator* Company. Then, to my consternation, I was required to furnish over the telephone intimate details as to the costume of the Company. I knew, of course, that they were in khaki and that they had "S.E.C." (*Spectator* Experimental Company) on the collar, to which information Lord Esher replied, "Oh, that is nice. That is very nice. And their trousers?" I had no idea as to the Company's trousers, but made a guess, which fortunately turned out to be right. St. Loe wrote a long letter to Tom with an account of the day at Windsor :

"I motored over from Newlands and did the journey in five minutes under the hour. Just as I was entering

Windsor I saw a column of khaki-clad men and a mounted officer marching along with a great swing. I imagined by the look of them at the distance that they were Guards. When, however, I got up close I saw to my delight that the men had the familiar ‘S.E.C.’ on their shoulder straps and that they were the *Spectator* Company. They had just done their 12-mile march, taking only 3 hours over it, including halts, so that they had marched at 4 miles an hour. I went on to the Castle and leaving the motor-car in one of the quadrangles walked to Lord Esher’s room. Lord Esher was very pleasant as he always is and he and I and General French, who was also there, chatted about the Company. To my dictation Lord Esher wrote out a few details on a piece of paper which had to be sent up to the King. The parade was ordered at 11 and at about ten minutes to we all went out into the quadrangle and stood about. There I found Haldane, Sir Dighton Probyn, Lord Knollys, the King’s private secretary, and one or two other soldiers and civilians, to whom I was introduced and who were all most friendly and nice. The King certainly sets a good example of courtesy to his household, for anything less jack-in-office or stiff and disagreeable than the people I saw cannot be imagined.

“At about five minutes to eleven Haldane was called up to speak to the King, who was standing under a sort of *porte cochère*, and then I was called up, and introduced by Haldane. The King shook hands in the most friendly and pleasant way and then began to talk to me and Haldane in a kind of triangular conversation. . . . He told me that he often read my paper and expressed his opinion that what I was doing with the *Spectator* Company would prove very useful. He evidently had paid great attention to it, and indeed his proposal to inspect was not produced by

my making interest with Lord Esher or anybody, but came direct from the King, who, unquestionably, has a very great gift for keeping in touch with public movements and public opinion.

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Soon the Queen appeared, and directly afterwards the King began the inspection, which he did by walking through the ranks. Then certain evolutions were performed by the Company, which you will see described in Pollock's letter in this week's *Spectator* and then there was a march past. In all these movements the men acquitted themselves well. Finally the King made a short speech to the men, which he did with excellent effect, using the phrase that 'The Experiment was one of national importance.'

"After the men had been dismissed Pollock and I went to lunch with the Household, which was an amusing entertainment. I sat next Lord Knollys and had some very pleasant talk with him. He is, as I daresay you know, a party Liberal. It is rather curious, indeed, that all the King's *entourage* seem to be Liberals, for Esher is, of course, a Liberal. On the whole I spent a very interesting and amusing day. The King's entertainment to the men was on a most liberal scale. They sat down to a perfectly admirable lunch, beautifully served on good china and with flowers on the table and everything most smart. They were, of course, extremely appreciative. You will, however, find details as to this in Pollock's letter to the *Spectator*."

All through the summer the world trooped to Hounslow. *The Times* sent two Special Correspondents, and the whole matter attracted great attention. So good did the Company become that everybody insisted that it must be

composed of picked men who had had previous military training, whereas the fact was that Colonel Pollock had rejected all men who had even been in the Volunteers, and when he discovered that two old soldiers had contrived to worm their way in, he instantly discharged them. In May Mr. Haldane himself went with General Douglas, the Adjutant-General, and before the experiment came to an end the Company was inspected at Aldershot by General Sir John French. One of the Staff wrote to St. Loe afterwards that without question they were much better than an ordinary company in a line regiment.

Towards the end of the six months a questionnaire was sent round to the men asking them why they had joined. Quite a common answer was, “I joined up to improve my appearance.” This was very sound psychology, for naturally the capable, self-confident, well set-up man has much more chance of obtaining a situation than the bashful or awkward. The following measurements, which appeared in the *Spectator* of October 13th, 1906, proved how well they had attained their end.

MEASUREMENTS (AVERAGE)

			<i>On joining</i>		<i>At the end of 3 months</i>		<i>At the end of 6 months</i>
Height	..	..	5ft. 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.	..	5ft. 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.	..	5ft. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Chest	..	..	35in. ..	..	36 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. ..	..	36 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.
Weight	..	..	134lb.	..	142lb ..	..	140 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

Colonel Pollock adds a note that the loss of 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds in the second half of the training was owing to their doing so much physical work in the great heat. Their record as to musketry, signalling, training results and conduct was equally favourable. They were disbanded on September 11th, having taught a lesson as to the possibility of

emergency training—a lesson which was not lost on the military authorities in the years of the Great War.

In the May of 1906 Mr. Haldane formed an informal committee under the presidency of Lord Esher with regard to “certain changes in the organisation and administration of the Auxiliary Forces.” This Committee he asked St. Loe to join. It met all through the summer, and the wits of the War Office christened it the *Duma*. The outcome was the scheme of County Associations, which were made responsible for the administration of all purely local territorial forces. These were later formed partly of nominated and partly of elected members, with the Lord-Lieutenant of each County as Chairman. The next year saw the formation of the Territorial Forces as we know them. St. Loe became a member of the first County Association for Surrey.

CHAPTER VII

THE SHADOW OF DEATH

It is hardly necessary to say that Tom took a great part in all these semi-military activities. On several occasions he rode with his father on the manœuvres, which the military authorities were always glad for St. Loe to join, and before he left Eton he had his Colours for shooting and shot for his school at Bisley. Before he went to Germany he had been exceedingly useful to me in the Junior Rifle Clubs which we instituted for boys of the elementary schools in the Newlands Corner Branch of the Victoria League. Everyone who is interested in the Empire knows that the Victoria League was founded directly after the death of the old Queen to facilitate intercourse and communication between Great Britain and the Overseas Empire. I had been asked to form a local branch, of which Lady Onslow consented to be President. Besides our adult activities, we had bought a certain number of miniature rifles in order that the boys of the elementary schools should learn shooting. The Chairmen of the local committees in the villages around looked after the boys when they were Chairmen, but the women Chairmen were very glad of Tom's help. He kept a record, arranged competitions, and generally managed the whole business for me.

This was his first introduction to social service. As in his short life there was to be no fulfilment, I must be

forgiven if I dwell on the promise of talent and good citizenship which so much delighted us. He made many good friends in Germany, and in the autumn of 1906 he paid some visits to school friends in Scotland, ending with a week-end with Sir Hugh and Lady Bell at Rounton Grange. Gertrude Bell, so well known to the world in later days, had for some years been a great friend of ours, and, having much respect for her power of judging men, I asked her whether she thought we were only blinded by parental fondness in thinking that Tom showed signs of such deep reserves of mental power. She told me that she considered that she had seldom met a boy with so big a mind—he was, she added, much too young to be able completely to manage it (he was just eighteen), but when in maturity he would achieve complete control, she thought we might all look forward greatly to the result. The next spring our old friend, Mr. Rudyard Kipling, wrote of him that he was “a man beyond all relation to his years.”

Tom went up to Balliol in the autumn of 1906, and there at once took up a remarkable position among his contemporaries. When the blow fell which shattered all our hopes, the mother of one of his friends spoke to a great friend of mine of the extraordinary influence Tom had already established over the little band of freshmen who had foregathered in that autumn term—“He must,” she said, “have been a wonderful person to have been so soon a sort of leader of those boys.”

He brought several friends back to Newlands for that last Christmas, and when he went up for the new term, we went abroad on a short visit to our old friends, the Granvilles, at Berlin.

I find I cannot write the end of this chapter. I can only say that when we got to London, Tom came up and spent

a day with us, and within a week a letter from St. Loe's aunt, Mrs. T. H. Green, summoned us hastily to Oxford. Tom had pneumonia. The blow fell with a swiftness which was perhaps merciful, and four days afterwards he died.

THE SHIFTED FOCUS

ALL those who have suffered a major catastrophe know only too well how every aspect of life is affected. Existence is taken up again, but taken up on a lower plane, and for us at that moment all our expectations for the future had to be altered and re-adjusted. The central figure of our hopes and anticipations was gone. But, though Tom had left us, he had left us together, and a home in which there were still two children was no place for repining.

Newlands and the garden, and beyond the garden the wide views which Tom had loved so well, were quieting, and the summer passed somehow. But a fresh blow fell in the autumn in my mother's death—indirectly brought about by shock. I was too much stunned emotionally to feel the loss of her delightful companionship and love as deeply as I did later on. I had also been very ill in August, and the struggle of re-adjustment was difficult. The gaiety of life—not that I was then in any condition to think of gaiety—was much subdued by my mother's death. Her brilliancy and wit acted like sunshine on all one's daily cares and worries. She would go for an ordinary walk along an apparently dull street, and come back with an account of what she had seen woven into a dramatic story which highly delighted her audience. She used no slang, and her English was impeccable, but, little as the present generation may believe it, her conversation was as vivid as though it had been embellished with the telling catchwords of the day. Beautiful as is the portrait of her by Watts, spoken of in an early chapter, I have always

thought that it missed something of her sparkle. It is the portrait of "Minnie Senior," young, graceful, and pensive—not of Mrs. Simpson, delighting, as she always declared she did, in "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world." It was the most innocent of delights. She was incapable of realising anything coarse or sensuous. Such things made no impact on her mind. Hers was undoubtedly a "Victorian" mental attitude—but it was Victorianism with a sparkle in it, and a talk with her was as exhilarating as a glass of champagne.

It is only now, when I have to face a new re-adjustment alone, that I can realise what were the reserves of strength and patience that St. Loe called up in those dark months. Although the *Spectator* was so closely connected with his hopes for Tom, he took up his work immediately, and neither the paper nor the causes for which it stood were allowed to suffer. The letter-files of that date reveal the usual long series of letters from Lord Cromer, together with correspondences with Lord Roberts, President Roosevelt, Mr. Morley, and, in fact, with most of the statesmen concerned in the pressing questions of the day.

The first great public matter which claimed attention was Lord Cromer's resignation, which followed hard upon the heels of his last and, according to the *Spectator*, greatest Report. His resignation was purely a medical matter. He wrote to St. Loe, "I feel that I can no longer stand the strain, and that the work should now be handed over to some younger man. I am delighted that Gorst should succeed me." The *Spectator* of May 11th, 1907, contained an article on his farewell speech in Egypt, in which Lord Cromer had said, "I see from the utterances of the Press, both European and local, that Sir Eldon Gorst is strongly advised to follow what is called my policy. I had therefore

better explain what my policy has been. It may be summed up in a very few words. It has been to tell the truth." The Cromers came to Newlands for a Sunday immediately on their return, but after this Lord Cromer became very unwell and soon went to Scotland, so that the usual correspondence was renewed. Late in July Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman moved a grant to Lord Cromer in recognition of his eminent services in Egypt. Both in the *Spectator* and in a letter St. Loe pays a tribute to the Prime Minister's speech, and in the *Spectator* he quotes what Miss Gertrude Bell had told in her book, *The Desert and the Sown*, "how she heard in camps upon Judæan hills or in desert bivouacs tales of what had been done by the great 'Cromer,' and how her Arab friends expressed their longing that the Syrians and the Bedouin might also find in him a protector from oppression." "Government in the interests of the governed" was, as St. Loe always maintained, the keynote of Lord Cromer's administration, and the younger generation, which see in him only the harsh administrator and acquisitive Imperialist, might change their opinion if they studied his reports and considered what the constitution and government of Egypt were like when Lord Cromer went there in the year 1883.

Among the mass of letters in the spring of 1907 I find a little pen portrait of two eminent Australians, given in a letter written by St. Loe to Harry Strachey in April, which I think is worth quoting :

"I had an interesting luncheon yesterday given by Mr. Donald, the editor of *The Daily Chronicle*, at the National Liberal Club to Free Trade journalists, to meet Mr. Deakin, Prime Minister of the Australian Commonwealth. Another Australian who was there and interested me very

much was a Mr. Hughes, a Labour man, but yet a Free Trader and very keen about universal national training to arms. On this subject he speaks like a major-general. He is a curious little man, born and bred in the East End of London as an umbrella-maker, but of Welsh origin. He went early to Australia and there became a Labour leader and the first President of the Seamen's Union, though I do not think he ever went to sea. He has now got a farm amongst other things and held high office in the short Labour Ministry. He is quite a little man and tanned very brown by the Australian sun, but gives great proof of the vitality and strength of the Cockney. I like Deakin although he is so violent a Protectionist."

In the summer of this year the second Peace Conference met at the Hague, opened by M. Nelidoff, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs. It is difficult to believe, if we turn to the *Spectator* of that date, that we are reading of a conference held thirty years ago. The problems considered have a most familiar aspect and are very little, if at all, nearer solution than they were in the early days of the century. The Conference met in June, and a month before Prince von Bülow, the German Chancellor, had announced in the Reichstag that Germany would take no part in the discussion on the limitation of armaments. The *Spectator* on May 4th summarised his reasons as follows :

"The German Government had considered the matter, but had been unable to discover any formula for arresting the growth of armaments that would meet all the notorious difficulties. . . , 'We leave it to those Powers who are sanguine that the discussion will be fruitful to conduct it alone.'"

The difficulty, as M. Nelidoff pointed out, was the
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question of the *status quo*. If the *status quo* were universally acceptable, it would be quite easy to keep the proportion that armaments bear to one another at a quarter or half their then cost. "But," said the *Spectator* (June 22nd, 1907), "what is this doctrine worth if another Power challenges it ;—if Germany, for example, says, 'I have need of the great army which you have not ; but I have equal need of the great navy which you have' ? For us to preach the *status quo* in answer to such a contention as this would be to make ourselves ridiculous." The *Spectator* from this date advocated with all the power at its command the beneficent effect of an international agreement that no war should be made without due warning given ; but the Hague Conference broke up in the autumn with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's proposal for the limitation of armaments cold-shouldered out of existence. Sir Edward Fry, on behalf of Great Britain, had expressed her willingness "to inform any other Power, which will pursue the same course, of the particulars of her ship-building programme," which communication, said the *Spectator* (October 26th), "would show that our naval policy is not a blind building up of vast sea power, but a coherent policy responsive to particular needs and challenges, and as ready to reduce as to increase British naval strength according to circumstances." The sole fruit of the Conference appears to have been the setting up of an International Prize Court ; but, the same article continues, "Unfortunately there were no laws for this Court to administer. . . . Meanwhile we must remember that, so far from having received from the Hague Conference an incentive to abate our anxious care for the defence of our country, we have been given an unmistakable and very direct warning not to do so."

CHAPTER IX

14, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, 1908-14

I am not the person to write of St. Loe's life at the *Spectator* office. I never went there, and I always chaffed him, saying that the former Editor, Mr. Hutton, had been much kinder about my contributions than St. Loe himself. He contended, however, that, although articles in the paper were in those days entirely anonymous, it would never do for the world to be able to say that the *Spectator* was written by Strachey's wife, and later by Strachey's wife and daughter. He also felt that he could not judge of my writing as impartially as he could of that of other people. This was true, but I think in the inverse sense to that in which he meant it. I therefore betook myself to what a certain old uncle of his, whose reviews he did not like, always called the "Vermin Department," that is, the short notices of novels, and occasionally of current literature.

With regard to his unknown life at No. 1, Wellington Street, my brother-in-law, Harry Strachey, who was appointed by Mr. Hutton as Art Critic on the *Spectator* on the resignation of Mr. D. S. McColl, was often at the office, and describes St. Loe's routine as much resembling that of other Editors. In early years he used to write there, but as the Editor's room became more and more a place of processions—that is, of people with important things to say streaming through it—he took to writing his leaders

at home. Soon after he became sole Editor, St. Loe found it impossible to deal with his work and his correspondence with his own hand, and he began dictating to a dictaphone. This was not entirely satisfactory, and about 1904 I persuaded him that he would be much happier with a secretary. He agreed, but he entirely declined to look for one, though he promised to employ a woman typist if I found her. I cannot remember to whose office I went, but I know that no less a person than Miss Elizabeth Baker, later to be so well known as the author of *Chains* and other plays, came to interview me with a view to taking the post. I was extremely simple about speeds in shorthand and typing in those days, and felt quite satisfied when I ascertained by conversation that she was a person with whom I felt sure that St. Loe would be in sympathy, who would not irritate him, and who would carry out his work without obtruding her own opinions. I intimated as much to Miss Baker, and she said in great surprise, "But don't you want to make a speed test?" So I looked very wise and said, "Oh, yes, I forgot," and proceeded to try to dictate a letter. She whipped out a notebook and pencil, which latter moved like smoke across the page, my ideas by no means keeping pace with her shorthand. I was sure, however, that speed would be what St. Loe would value, and there and then began the many years of pleasant work which they had together. Miss Baker usually worked with him at the office, though as time went on she came more and more to whatever house we were inhabiting, and on Saturdays she always came down to Newlands, where she very kindly wrote a good many letters for me.

It was in the early years of the century that the irreverent nickname "Ed. *Spec.*" was bestowed upon St. Loe, and many of our younger friends found it a welcome

halfway-house between calling him by his Christian name and the formal Mr. Strachey. It was indeed astonishing how few people ever called him Mr. Strachey. He was almost universally known among his friends either as St. Loe or Ed. *Spec.* though I do not think the people to whom he was St. Loe realised his editorial nickname.

All through our lives, except for a brief period from about 1904 to 1908, when St. Loe rode in the morning, I always walked with him from St. James's Park Station, which we reached by underground, across the Park to the bottom of Savoy Street, returning from Charing Cross. I shall not forget the long years of delightful early morning walks across St. James's Park—sometimes seeking the shady paths and sometimes the sunny—or how we passed under the arch of the Horse Guards Parade, and thence down a short street with a glimpse of the river at the end ; then came the corner of Savoy Street, and the steps to the bridge parted us for the morning. After my mother's death, as I had inherited the Senior furniture which had been left her by my grandfather, it was obviously extravagant to go on taking furnished houses. On the other hand, we had such serious warning from the doctors as to Amabel's health that we wanted to live as much at Newlands as possible. We therefore, as a compromise, took an unfurnished flat in Queen Anne's Mansions, keeping our household at Newlands and coming up every week from Tuesday to Friday. Here St. James's Park was at our doors and the morning walk could begin without the necessity of a railway journey. I am afraid I am of too Martha-like a disposition to like having food and furniture looked after by anyone but my own servants, and I soon felt that, though the management of a household was no doubt a troublesome matter, the conditions of a service flat were

unbearable. We therefore quickly cleared out of Queen Anne's Mansions, and, with terrible extravagance, took a house which was to let in Queen Anne's Gate. Of course, we went over a great many houses, and finally the house-agent said, "Would you like a house in Queen Anne's Gate?" "Would I like a roc's egg?" I countered. But he produced an order to view Number 14—a beautiful "Adam" house, which, we found afterwards, had been the site of the Towneley Museum. It was so dear that I determined not to mention it to St. Loe; but unfortunately he rang me up on the telephone that morning and asked me whether I had heard or seen anything I liked, and I let out the secret. He insisted on going to see it directly after lunch, and, once seen, to take it was only a matter of days. The house was much too big to be fully furnished with what I had inherited, and with its delicate details and big rooms made a magnificent field in which St. Loe could practise one of his favourite pastimes—the buying of furniture at auction-sales. I still have a certain Venetian cabinet about which he wrote quite an epic to his brother Harry :

"Did I tell you the story of my gilt Venetian cabinet? You know I have always longed to have one for our drawing-room. I wanted a Venetian cabinet something after the style of the South Street Italian cabinets. The other day, walking in King Street, St. James', I saw in the window of a curiosity shop under Willis's Rooms, a most beautiful gilt Venetian cabinet. I showed it to Amy and said: 'That is the thing I want to pick up as a bargain, but I won't even ask the price because in a shop like that it will be far over our heads. They will probably want at the very least £100 for it and possibly a great deal more.'

That was about six weeks ago. About ten days ago I went into Willis's Rooms to look at some pictures that were to be sold by auction and there, to my intense astonishment, I saw the said cabinet. I was much excited, thinking it was probably going to be put up for auction and that I would have a bid. The auctioneer's clerk was at that moment crossing the room. I said to him : ' Is this thing going to be sold ? ' because most of the things were being packed up after an auction. ' Oh,' he said, ' the sales are over now till October.' Then with trembling lips I said : ' I suppose, then, this was sold at your last sale ? ' ' No,' said he, ' it was not sold.' Then said I : ' Do you think the owners would like to sell ? ' ' Yes,' he said, ' I think they would,' to which I replied, ' But I'm afraid this is much too expensive for me. What do you think they would want ? ' Imagine my astonishment when he replied : ' I daresay they would take £15 for it.' On this the spirit of the bargainer awoke within me and I said, ' Oh, no, that is more than I could give, but you might offer £10.' Accordingly he took my name and address and three days afterwards I was told that the cabinet was mine if I would send a cheque for £10 and remove it. This I did and it is now at the flat and I mean to-morrow, if I have time, to go and look at my treasure. I hope I shall not be disappointed. The gold is a sort of yellow green and there are bits of looking glass let in. ' Your Lordship knows such furniture. It is not Louis Seize furniture, but very good furniture.' I take it that it was made about 1700 or 1750. It is quite plain and no fruit or stucco but, of course, like all Italian cabinet making, very rough inside and at the back. I expect that after the Renaissance the Italians became very bad carpenters and thought stucco and glue could do everything."

Soon after buying this delightful object he met another small gilt cabinet of about the same date, of which the top part was supported by two most engaging gilt lions. In later days when we gave dances I remember meeting those lions looking quite at home tucked under the arms of the man who was moving out the furniture from the drawing-room, and now our grandchildren delight in their company.

The great feature of 14, Queen Anne's Gate was the graceful staircase which went up to the second floor. It followed the round wall upwards, and its lines were a delight to the eye every time one came up or down stairs. The Zoffany picture of Charles Towneley (who was, oddly enough, the cousin of the man whom St. Loe's niece was to marry, Lord O'Hagan, who represents the Towneley family) shows him in the big lobby on the first floor of 14, Queen Anne's Gate surrounded by immense statues. This was, no doubt, the reason why the floor was reinforced by a pillar going up from the hall, which obviously had nothing to do with the plan of the house. When it was a question of dancing, the pillar was exceedingly useful, for there was no fear, even though the house was old, of the dancers being precipitated into the dining-room. The same dining-room, which looked into St. James's Park, was a lovely room with scagliola pillars of a deep purple, in imitation of porphyry, set at intervals round the wall. The walls were covered a terrible example of Lincrusta Walton. The decorators said this could not be removed, and we had to content ourselves with painting it apple green, after which it did not look so bad. Two niches with shell tops, contrived with all the Adam brothers' fineness of design, called for statues, and, possessing two (one of which has now been given to Admiralty

House with a long family history), we found it necessary to get green scagliola pedestals which would accord with the decoration of the room. It was interesting to find that the representative of the firm who supplied them—I think the name was Bell and Co.—looked up his records and found that many years before they had supplied the scagliola for the pillars. The dining-room was very large—in fact, when we wanted to have a big party we found two round tables seating twelve each not at all too much for it. Although well acquainted with the dictum given by a celebrated Victorian diner-out, “A dinner party to be perfect should be not fewer than the Graces or more than the Muses,” I have always maintained that there are two species of dinner-parties. One is the enormous party at which everybody talks to their neighbour and no general conversation can be attempted. For this party the greater number of people in the room, the better, for it becomes a series of long *tête-à-têtes*. The other kind of dinner-party, that at which really good talk can be enjoyed, is at its best when the company numbers six, though eight are permissible.

Our entertaining in the summer of 1909 was entirely confined to the category of the formal large dinner-party. In the second week of June the first Imperial Press Conference met, ably organised by Sir Harry Brittain, and naturally the London Press was exceedingly busy in their entertainment. The Northcliffes gave an enormous luncheon-party at Sutton Place, which was great fun. It was arranged on the lines of a public function, with quantities of little tables, and the guests were told beforehand exactly at which little table they were to sit. I remember that it was a lovely day, and we all trooped out after lunch to the gardens which Lady Northcliffe had made so

beautiful. We in Queen Anne's Gate had a dinner-party of about twenty-four at two tables, which went off without a hitch, save that the man who was asked to take down the wife of the delegate of the French Provinces of Canada vowed at the last moment before dinner that he could not and would not speak French, and I had to rush down and change everybody's position. Hostesses of experience will know full well what this entails. One is very lucky if, in the agony of last moment arrangements, one does not find that one has put husband and wife as next-door neighbours.

Later in the season came an interesting occasion, organised by Mr. Bernard Pares, when a group of Russians, who were members of the Third Duma and of the Upper House (the Council of the Empire), came to visit England. St. Loe, thinking it an exceedingly important affair, practically put the house at the disposal of Sir Edward Grey and Sir William Tyrrell, who asked us to entertain these representatives at two large dinners, to which we invited the members of the Cabinet and the Front Bench Conservative politicians. Of the latter I can remember no one but Mr. and Miss Balfour, but at the second dinner, after which we had an evening party, the principal guests were the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mrs. Davidson and the Prime Minister and Mrs. Asquith. Mr. Bernard Pares most kindly came once or twice to give us lessons in the pronunciation of the names of our Russian guests ; but, although he complimented me on the way in which, parrotlike, I repeated the names after him, no sooner had he left the house than I found the whole thing as difficult as ever. I shall never forget the assembling of the first party. We had at that time a most excellent butler, a fine organiser, but unfortunately a misanthrope. The fact is

that he hated mankind. If the servants gave a dance at Newlands, as happened every year, instead of acting as Master of the Ceremonies, he locked himself into his bedroom. He generally deputed the announcing at a big dinner-party to a certain very well-known waiter, who was, I think, a messenger at one of the public offices and who, with satellites, came to help whenever we had a big function. However, on the day of the Russian dinner something happened and our own butler had himself to cope with the announcing. It was an embarrassing moment. The door was flung open and revealed him standing speechless with his mouth wide open, and six Russians bowing in a group. I need not have been afraid. The principal guest stepped forward and with the utmost aplomb introduced himself with a low bow, and then proceeded to introduce each of his colleagues by name. It was most gracefully done and saved all embarrassment. In fact, that unfortunate emotion only began when I tried to introduce the Russians to their fellow-guests. However, I don't think they even expected anyone to pronounce their names properly ; they were most easy to get on with and, as far as I can remember, all talked a certain amount of English. My dinner partner was Homiakoff, the head of the Upper House, and I found him very much more interesting when I could persuade him to talk French. He gave me a vivid account of the journeys of the Red Cross trains across Siberia in the Russo-Japanese War and the immense difficulties encountered by that long, long transport over a single line of rail. Amabel, of course, was not yet out, but the fun was going to be so fast and furious that she came up from Newlands for the second occasion, and was much entertained by Count Bobrinsky's description of how difficult the Russians had found the matter of costume

and how impossible they found it to know when it was correct to put on tails or what they called "a little pea-jacket," by which, presumably, they meant a dinner-jacket. On that occasion the members of the Cabinet came to dinner, all except Sir Edward Grey, who said he had not time for dinner, but slipped quietly upstairs about 10 o'clock and was shown into the library, where he gave a series of *tête-à-tête* interviews to the Russians and other big people. "What fun it was!" an American friend of mine said to me afterwards. "There we were, all shouting away in the lobby and the drawing-room, while Sir Edward Grey was holding a court in the library, with people being taken up to him one by one as if he were a fortune-teller!" The most vivid personal emotion that I can remember on that occasion was when the Russian Ambassador, Count von Benckendorff, who was talking to me at my post at the top of the staircase, insisted on trying to sit on the frail and Adam-like banisters. I felt it would not add to the success of the *entente cordiale* if he were precipitated on to the stone pavement of the hall. We were greatly excited because we heard that one of the delegates, I believe M. Ephrémoff, was a Cossack of the Don, and we imagined a warlike figure striding into the room with a cavalry swing. No such thing! He was a charming man, but very small, with large pince-nez, and looked like a professor. The party must have been a success. It lasted till well after midnight, and, judging by the noise they made (I was much too wise to increase it by having a band in the hall), they all enjoyed themselves thoroughly. A few days after, St. Loe received the following letter from the Russian delegates :

" London,

" *7th July, 1909.*

" DEAR MR. ST. LOE STRACHEY,—As our delightful visit in England is now coming to an end, we write to ask you to accept our most grateful thanks for all the trouble which you have taken for our entertainment.

" We know how much work it must have involved to ensure that every arrangement should run with such complete smoothness as it did, but what touches us more is the knowledge that all this work was the hearty expression of real kindness to us and our country. We hope that a time may come when you, or other Englishmen and Scotchmen, may give us some opportunity of showing in Russia how warmly we reciprocate this kind feeling, and we are sure that such generous hospitality as you have given us is one of the most real ways of drawing our two countries closer together and therefore helps to realise the ardent wish which we believe is entertained both in England and in Russia.

" Yours very sincerely,

" N. HOMIAKOFF.

" VL. BOBRINSKY.

" V. MAKLAKOV.

" BARON A. KRUDENER-STRUVE.

" ALEX. ZWEGUINTZOFF.

" S. SHIDLOVSKY.

" S. MAKSOUDOFF.

" H. LERCHE.

" G. GUTCHKOFF.

" M. CHELNOKOFF.

" COMTE D. OLSOUFIEV.

" LEON EFREMOFF."

After three vast parties I confess I was a little tired, and not particularly pleased when a little while afterwards a young Foreign Office man appeared at breakfast (Sir Edward Grey lived just opposite in Queen Anne's Gate) and told us that Sir Edward wished us to entertain four Turkish Pachas who were members of a delegation from the Turkish Parliament. It seemed to me that we had already asked all the distinguished people of our acquaintance to dinner twice, and I remember thinking it exceedingly difficult to arrange a party which would have the faintest chance of being agreeable. However, as usual, St. Loe was undaunted. He was, indeed, the ideal host, except for one characteristic drawback. He was apt to get so absorbed, if he were with anyone interesting, that he became quite oblivious of the general run of the party and had to be fished out from odd corners, where he was talking happily, having forgotten that there was anyone in the room besides himself and his interlocutor. However, in the end the party for the Pachas presented no difficulties ; Lord and Lady Cromer very kindly came to the rescue, and by a great stroke of luck we heard only a few days before the dinner that Gertrude Bell was in London. We sent her an S.O.S., to which she responded nobly, and her advent gave an immediate fillip to the party, because one of the principal Pachas was an old friend of hers and they almost literally fell into each other's arms. From that moment all went well, and the stickiness and formality so justly dreaded by all hostesses were entirely absent.

It must be confessed that 14, Queen Anne's Gate was a great asset that summer. Indeed, it was a house which lent itself to entertaining. A couple of years later, when Amabel came out, we took to giving balls, at one of which I created a considerable and most favourable sensation

by serving hot scalloped oysters for supper. At these balls I used to post myself in the lobby between the dances, in order to have the pleasure of seeing the beautiful rhythmic movement produced by the couples up and down the charming staircase. They sat on the stairs leading down and also on the stairs leading up, and all rising simultaneously made their way respectively upwards and downwards to the ball-room—an unrehearsed dance figure which it was delightful to watch. That same ball-room has now changed its functions and become the board-room of the Central Chamber of Commerce. I often wonder whether it regrets the change.

CHAPTER X

SINGLE CHAMBER GOVERNMENT

Mr. Lloyd George's Budget of 1909 provided the serious interest of that summer of entertaining. Even Free Trade could not reconcile St. Loe to the Government's socialistic programme. In 1907 he had a correspondence with the Duke of Devonshire with regard to the line the *Spectator* should take. The Duke was the only Unionist leader in whom St. Loe had confidence, and his death the following year (1908) was a great blow to his followers. In a letter to him dated January 2nd, 1907, St. Loe gives an interesting comment as to why a weekly newspaper is bound to attempt to guide the opinion of the country, while a Chamber of hereditary legislators should more properly interpret this opinion.

"The House of Lords," he wrote, "very naturally guides its action by the opinion prevalent in the country as a whole. But if those who help to form that opinion do not give their own views but rather try to put themselves into the position of the House of Lords and anticipate beforehand the considerations that weigh with the Peers, they would end by vitiating part of the data on which the Lords will make up their minds. I am afraid I have put this clumsily, but what I mean is that though the House of Lords may in all the circumstances consider it necessary to decide against the men of moderate and conservative views in the country, they at any rate ought to have that opinion frankly and strongly expressed."

Mr. Asquith succeeded Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister in 1908, and in the spring of 1909 the *Spectator* opposed Mr. Lloyd George's first Budget, especially the Land Tax clauses, with all the strength at its command. It will be remembered that the Budget was not finally thrown out by the Lords till November, and the whole summer was occupied with the question of tactics. In the *Spectator* of July 10th St. Loe had put forward an ingenious study of precedents in regard to the Lords' power of rejecting portions of a Finance Bill. Writing to Mr. Balfour on July 9th, 1909, he said :

" Shortly, I contend in my article that the Commons originally claimed no more than that the Lords could not alter or amend a tax but that owing to a good deal of very loose talking and writing, they gradually slid into the proposition that the Lords could not alter or amend a tax Bill—a very different proposition. Why this verbal confusion was not detected was due to the fact that at that time each tax very often had a separate Bill of its own. Therefore it seemed pedantic to press the distinction between altering a tax and altering the Bill which contained the tax."

Mr. Balfour was much interested and answered him as follows :

" July 13th, 1909.

" I am most grateful to you for sending me your article. Your new point is extremely ingenious, and worthy of the most careful consideration.

" Very few people are aware, or were aware till you and others took up the matter, that a Finance Bill in *our* sense of the word is a most modern procedure ; and there is

certainly no *à priori* difficulty in believing that, when taxes were dealt with by separate Bills, people got into the habit of saying that the Lords could not alter a Bill, when they really meant that the Lords could not alter a tax.

“ It is extraordinary how difficult it seems to be to find out exactly how our ancestors proceeded in these matters. Sir Courtney Ilbert told me the other day that one of Pitt’s Budgets was founded upon three thousand Resolutions, or more ! These, I imagine, were all passed in one night ; though it seems difficult to see how they could be even *read* through from the table. I gather no record exists enabling us to determine what exactly was done under this strange unwieldy method.”

The *Spectator* advocated the rejection of the land clauses only, but the Lords thought otherwise and rejected the whole Budget, with the necessary consequence of a prorogation, followed by a dissolution in December.

In the January Election (1910) the Government came back so greatly weakened that it was obvious that the Nationalists under Mr. John Redmond held the balance of power, while the forty members of the Labour Party announced with threats to Mr. Asquith that they stood, not for the reform, but for the abolition of the House of Lords. Naturally the financial situation created great anxiety, for the 1909-10 Budget had never been passed, and Mr. Redmond, with the help of the Labour members, made use of the difficulties of the Government to bargain with the Prime Minister as to the ultimate passing of a measure to abolish the Lords’ veto. In March the Veto Resolutions were introduced into the House of Commons, and the Prime Minister alluded to the possible necessity of creating four hundred new peers to force through the

Lords a Bill embodying the Resolution. The plan of limiting the power of the Lords' veto on all Bills with which they were competent to deal to three rejections in successive sessions, reminded people of the "*trois soumissions respectueuses*" required by French law when a French subject marries without the consent of his or her parents. In April the 1909-10 Budget was re-introduced and was passed by the Lords at the end of the month. St. Loe's solution of the political crisis was the submission of the Veto Bill to a Referendum or Poll of the People, and from that time onwards he never ceased to urge this reform on every Party as a safeguard to what without it would practically become Single Chamber Government. As soon as the Budget was passed, Mr. Asquith introduced the Veto Bill, later called the Parliament Bill (May 1910), the provisions of which were in a line with the Veto Resolutions, though it possessed a preamble promising that a reformed Second Chamber constituted on a popular, instead of a hereditary, basis should later be substituted for the present House of Lords.

At this moment of heated controversy a sudden truce was given to political affairs by the death of King Edward. It was immediately felt that it would be most unfair to force upon a new Sovereign so unparalleled a constitutional crisis as the creation of peers in order to force a Bill through the Upper Chamber. At the time of the King's death the House had adjourned for the Spring Recess, and, though they were called back on Wednesday, May 11th, to pass loyal addresses, the Government immediately announced that Parliament would not meet for business till June 8th. The pageant of the King's funeral was very impressive, but what chiefly touched the heart of the British people was that, by the wish of Queen Alexandra,

his little dog Cæsar was led in the long procession from Westminster Hall to Paddington. It was said that the German Emperor protested that it was the first time he had ever been asked to go behind a dog in a procession. Certain of the Great Powers were represented by Special Envoys, and, notably, the United States of America sent their ex-President, Mr. Roosevelt, who was in Europe at the time.

A week or two after this Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt promised to dine with us, and this was an occasion on which I felt that the old motto of the party numbering "Not more than the Muses" must be strictly adhered to. Mr. Roosevelt and Lord Cromer had never met, so that the first guests we asked were Lord and Lady Cromer. Beyond that, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, who had been Mr. Roosevelt's best man, came with his wife, and the little party of eight, with the table properly adjusted, was extremely interesting. Mr. Roosevelt was entirely sympathetic as to the dignity with which the ceremonies of the King's funeral had been conducted, but he told us that matters had been diversified for him by the fury of the French Special Envoy because the Persian Special Envoy inevitably got into the carriage with the French Envoy and Mr. Roosevelt. "*Ce Perse*," as the Frenchman called him, was really an innocent creature—"a little, shrinking, water-wagtail of a man!" said Mr. Roosevelt. None the less, the Frenchman was unfailingly irritated by his appearance. The talk ranged over the political situation of the day to the proper principles on which self-government can be established in outlying lands under the British flag. After dinner I felt it my duty to attempt to make the usual gesture to remove the women of the party; but Mr. Roosevelt said, "Why must you all go? Lord Cromer and I

don't want to get drunk." We thankfully relapsed into our seats, regardless, I am afraid, of the dozen or so friends who were going to look in in the evening to meet our distinguished guest. At the end of the next year Mr. Roosevelt put a postscript to a letter to St. Loe—"Give my warm regards to Mrs. Strachey. I often think of that delightful dinner at your house. Give my warm regards to Cromer too, if you see him."

Almost as soon as Parliament met, the Prime Minister invited the leaders of the Opposition to a Conference on the subject of the Veto Resolutions. The Conference sat all through the summer, adjourning over the Summer Recess—a fact which led optimists to think that a solution of the constitutional crisis might be found.

The autumn months were enlivened for the *Spectator* by a virulent attack by Mr. Lloyd George on the paper, and especially on St. Loe. "The *Spectator*," said he at Crediton on October 22nd, "is edited at present by an exceedingly pretentious, pompous, and futile person, and I have just one or two words to say about the article . . . which he is good enough to devote to me." Needless to say, it was a long time before we ceased to chaff St. Loe as to Mr. Lloyd George's "nice derangement" of adjectives, as Mrs. Malaprop would have called them.

The failure of the Conference in November was followed by an immediate dissolution, with a December Election which left the Parties almost exactly as they were, with the Irish again holding the balance of power. More than ever did St. Loe believe in the Referendum as the only satisfactory solution of the constitutional problem, and he was of great assistance to Lord Balfour of Burleigh in the drafting of the Bill which Lord Balfour introduced, called "The Reference to the People Bill." This Bill was

originally drafted, on St. Loe's instructions, by Mr. F. W. Pember, now the Warden of All Souls', then practising at the Parliamentary Bar. Before fathering it in the House of Lords, Lord Balfour, of course, made many very valuable alterations ; but no amount of amendment could save the Bill. It did not get a second reading.

Lord Lansdowne in May introduced, also in the House of Lords, a most interesting Bill for a re-constitution of the Upper House, and on this St. Loe wrote to Lord Cromer with regard to a conversation he had had in Queen Anne's Gate with our neighbour, Lord Haldane :

“ I happened to meet Haldane outside my house on Tuesday and had a talk with him about Lord Lansdowne's Bill. He is evidently disinclined to let it through on the compromise lines of which we talked yesterday. He declares—this of course in confidence—that he and Grey and Asquith are absolutely in earnest about keeping the promise of the Preamble and introducing within two years or so a Bill establishing a democratic Second Chamber. He inferred that he and Grey would not have stayed in the Cabinet under any other conditions, and, as I have said, that they had Asquith with them. He also told me that it was he who drew the Preamble of the Parliament Bill and that it was very carefully worded to effect their purpose. I naturally countered him by saying that at any rate most of the Liberal Party did not want a democratic Second Chamber and that therefore they would probably prefer Lansdowne's Bill as a means of getting them out of the difficulty of fulfilling the Preamble promises, which they hated. He replied : ‘ You are quite mistaken. There is a great part of the Party, probably a majority, who are sincere Second Chamber men and want to see the

Preamble carried out.' In fact he tried to make out that it was only the Labour people who were in favour of Single Chamber government."

The Lords moved two important amendments to the Parliament Bill, one by Lord Cromer on the treatment of Money Bills, and the other by Lord Lansdowne introducing the Referendum with special reference to Home Rule. But both amendments were rejected and the Bill sent up to the Lords in substantially the same form as before, with a threat of creating a sufficient number of peers to overcome the resistance of the Lords. By the end of the summer the Unionist peers were ranged into two parties. The followers of Lord Lansdowne, who included Lord Cromer, Lord Curzon, and Lord St. Aldwyn, were convinced of the inadvisability of insisting on the amendments and were in favour of abstention from voting. The other party, under Lord Halsbury, stood for the rejection of the Bill. London Society called this no-compromise party "ditchers" from their avowed determination to "die in the last ditch." I remember Mr. Arthur Lee, then a member of the House of Commons, saying that "dine in the last ditch" would be a better name for them, as they constantly met at dinner to consider tactics.

August passed in negotiations, in which Lord Cromer played a considerable part, the Government being in two minds whether to create the peers before sending the Bill back to the House of Lords, or to give the House an opportunity of passing the Bill. St. Loe wrote to Lord Cromer reminding him of the parallel to the situation which was afforded by the Duke of Wellington's conduct in regard to the Reform Bill. Meeting the new Duke of Devonshire at Brooks', St. Loe

“told him the story which my father used to tell me, and which I have never seen in print but which I think he got from his cousin Charles Buller. It was to the effect that when the Duke of Wellington made up his mind to let the Bill pass, he watched its passage through the House of Lords with a body of trusted and loyal followers. He and they were determined that if the Bill was endangered by a rush of irresponsible Peers, to vote for it. Yet the Duke hated the Reform Bill more even than Lord Lansdowne hates the Parliament Bill. That was fine, and I think Lord Lansdowne should follow the example.”

On July 21st St. Loe told the story to the world in a letter to *The Times*.

In the end the “ditchers” lost, thirty-seven Unionist peers voted with the Government, and the Halsbury group was defeated by a majority of seventeen.

An amusing piece of gossip as to the creation of peers was afforded by one of the Liberal Whips, who told us that he had received letters from a certain number of Unionists saying that they thought it so important to preserve the present character of the House of Lords that, though they disagreed with the Bill, they were quite willing to vote for it, if the Government thought they would be useful members of the House of Lords.

Such were the events in home politics during that long hot summer of 1911. The Season was brilliant. There was a hectic week in June, during which took place both the King and Queen’s Coronation and the first of the enormous costume balls at the Albert Hall, which was known as the Shakespeare Ball. Half London took what were called “quadrilles,” that is, parties of sixteen or more representing the characters of one of the plays, which

processed round the hall and subsided into dancing a quadrille—many of them very badly. Lady Randolph Churchill, then Mrs. George West, asked me to take *Othello*, and Amabel, who was hardly seventeen, thought it an excellent moment to come out. I, of course, cast her for Desdemona, and St. Loe enacted *Othello*. Amabel and I wished him to wear a mediæval turban, and he accordingly went to Clarkson to see about it ; but Clarkson was obdurate. He said he did all the Indian turbans for the Military Tournament, and he would not consent to any variation of the official pattern. Accordingly, Amabel undertook the job herself, and I remember a quaint scene in which she sat wreathing white draperies round a red fez perched on her father's head, while Gertrude Bell and St. Loe had a long and really very appropriate conversation on the politics of the Near East.

The parliamentary crisis once over in August, we fled to the hills of Wales, where we had taken a house on the Mawddach Estuary—our first introduction to that enchanted country, with which we were later to be made familiar by our son-in-law. We got through just before the beginning of the great Railway Strike, the sudden collapse of which was a matter of international politics, as rumoured at the time and revealed later in the many books of memoirs which have recently appeared.

There remained the stubborn fact that the Parliament Act was the law of the land and that a majority, even a narrow majority, of the House of Commons could pass any Bill over the heads of the Second Chamber. In April, 1912, Mr. Asquith brought in what the *Spectator* characterised as “ the most unjust, unworkable, insincere, and so the worst ” of the three Home Rule Bills. The debates were heated, and the Session lasted right on till February

1913, the first submission to the Lords not taking place till the end of January. The Bill was rejected. In March the House met for a fresh Session and the Home Rule Bill was passed again through the House of Commons, to be rejected on July 15th, 1913, for the second time by the Lords. A most unwise suggestion was made by certain members of the Conservative Party that the Veto of the Crown should be used after the third submission to ensure that a dissolution should precede the passing of the Home Rule Bill. In a memorandum submitted to several of the Unionist leaders and in letters to Lord Cromer, St. Loe characterised this as a very dangerous movement. "It would have been begun, like the Die-Hard movement, in a kind of innocent bluff, but might have ended in revolution." Whether the Government was paving the way for a General Election before the third submission of the Home Rule Bill or not, it is certain that Mr. Asquith sketched the proposals they intended to make during the next Session for the reform of the House of Lords, on the lines of the Preamble to the Parliament Act. In the previous year the Unionist Club of Belfast had passed a resolution repeating the solemn resolve of the Ulster Convention of 1892 "to repudiate the authority of an Irish Parliament, should it ever be constituted." The outlook was dangerous in the extreme, and profound relief was shown when Lord Loreburn, who had been succeeded as Lord Chancellor by Mr. Haldane in June 1912, proposed a Conference "to settle the Irish question with the consent of all parties."

The Parliament Act, Home Rule, and the Conference on Irish affairs were leading factors in the situation which developed in the following summer (1914), when Germany had good cause for believing that England was on the brink of civil war and so could take no part in international complications.

CHAPTER XI

"DRAGON'S TEETH"

1900 to 1914

"Looking back, I have often thought that if when the century opened we had understood Germany better, we might have succeeded in inducing her and France and Russia to come to a better understanding of each other. But that required that we ourselves should have known more about the Germans."—LORD HALDANE'S Autobiography.

So wrote that wise man, Lord Haldane, in the sober years which followed the War. Looking back on our lives in the first fourteen years of this century, I see them overshadowed from year to year by the German menace. Psychologists will very likely say that fear of Germany's enmity and coming aggressive action brought the War to pass. They may be right. On the other hand, a great newspaper, such as the *Spectator*, is—as St. Loe always said—the watch-dog of the nation, and if the watch-dog believes danger to be coming, it is his duty to bark.

Right on from the winter of 1902-3 crisis after crisis gave rise to the profoundest apprehension. In that year the making of the Baghdad Railway was the first matter of dispute. In November 1902 the German Emperor made an unofficial visit to England, the object of which, the *Spectator* suggested, was to interest Great Britain in the scheme of making a railway across Asia Minor to Baghdad. Mr. Balfour in his first speech as Prime Minister, however, denounced the Press stories of the German

Emperor's objects as fantastic. In the spring the matter was revived and the Government seriously considered their action. The *Spectator* took an exceedingly strong line against a project which would involve considerable difficulties in Europe and Persia, besides the probability of an undertaking to convey the Indian mails by the railway. In March a statement was made in a lecture to the Geographical Society of Germany to the effect that the German Anatolian Railway had secured the extension of its line to Koweit, on the Persian Gulf, "after diplomatic negotiations with Great Britain." The project in its various bearings was debated all through the month of April, and finally on Thursday, April 23rd, the Prime Minister replied to a question in the House of Commons by stating that :

"The Convention between the Turkish Government and the Anatolian Railway Company left the whole scheme of railway development through Asia Minor to the Persian Gulf entirely in the hands of a company under German control. To such a Convention England would not in any case be a party." (*Spectator*, April 25th, 1903.)

This refusal was attributed in German newspapers to three distinct influences—"first, to those politicians and publicists who urge an understanding with Russia ; secondly, to Eastern shipping interests ; and, thirdly, to anti-German feeling."

During the winter of 1902-3 Mr. W. T. Arnold, formerly of the *Manchester Guardian*, wrote a series of letters to the *Spectator*, with the object of examining the attitude, "the present temper and the future aspirations of the Germans" towards this country. The facts in these letters, which were signed by the pseudonym *Vigilans sed Æquus*,

were entirely taken from German publicists, books, pamphlets or newspapers, and there is no doubt that the cumulative evidence of the six papers, the whole of which were subsequently published in book form, gave a most menacing picture of the state of German feeling.

In 1904 an Anglo-French Agreement had been concluded as to Morocco which had not pleased Berlin, and the following year (1905), after the German Emperor had paid a visit to Tangier in April, he sent a Special Envoy to Morocco to demand that the French instructors in the Shereefian army should be dismissed and replaced by Germans. In September 1905 a Conference was arranged at Algeciras, the basis of which was to be the Convention of Madrid of 1880, and not the Anglo-French Agreement.

In a private letter to St. Loe, dated October 21st, 1905, Mr. Spender of the *Westminster Gazette* wrote as follows :

“ I agree fully that as regards Germany no change of *policy* is called for and least of all any weakening of our agreement with France. But at the same time it seems to me that a change of *feeling* is necessary even to the permanence of the understanding with France. You probably have had just the same experience as I have had in regard to the French during the last few months : (1) agitated appeals to do anything possible to damp down the anti-German agitation in this country, since the French public were in a fright lest we should involve them in *our* quarrel with Germany and then (2) when something quite modest was done in this direction, nervous warnings to stop lest the same public should think that we were going to desert them. We can’t live perpetually on this razor’s edge between doing too much and doing too little

but shall infallibly topple over on one side or the other, unless feeling grows more stable. Then, after the Morocco affair and the nervous incompetence of the French in handling it, the Germans will pinch France whenever they want to get at us, and, if the quarrel goes on, the French will by and by ask whether the understanding with us is worth the practical inconvenience of this friction."

In the following spring Lord Cromer wrote to St. Loe on March 10th (1905) :

" If, as seems probable, a settlement is eventually made at Algeciras, it will be mainly due to Nicolson, who has been well supported by Grey. The former has done splendidly. Without him, the French would have been perfectly helpless. I speak with a full knowledge of my facts, as I of course see all the despatches and telegrams that pass. It will be an immense blessing if this Morocco business is settled, for at present it weighs upon the whole European situation, and prevents anything being done in other directions."

An unsuccessful attempt to adjust the matter of the Baghdad Railway was made during the visit of the German Emperor to Windsor in the autumn of 1907 ; but the negotiations were subsequently blocked from Berlin. In the autumn of next year, 1908, Austria suddenly declared the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in the following spring Germany confronted Russia with a demand to recognise the annexation or defend Servia with the sword. But in the middle of the crowded summer of 1911 the scene again changed to Morocco, Germany sending the gunboat *Panther* to Agadir, a port

on the Atlantic coast of Morocco. France had sent a second expedition to Fez, and Germany’s excuse was that she wished to protect her interests in the neighbourhood of the Sus River. She asked, indeed, for compensation as the price of leaving Agadir. At the end of July the *Spectator* reports that the Prime Minister in the House of Commons made the following statement as to the situation:

“The facts, as he stated them, are : (1) Conversations between Germany and France are proceeding. (2) We are not a party to those conversations. (3) The subject of them may not affect British interests, but, on the other hand, it may. (4) It is our desire that those conversations should result in a settlement of which we can cordially say that there is no prejudice to British interests, and the Government believe that to be quite possible. The Prime Minister proceeded :

“The question of Morocco itself bristles with difficulties, but outside Morocco, in other parts of West Africa, we should not think of attempting to interfere with territorial arrangements considered reasonable by those who are more directly interested. Any statements that we have so interfered to prejudice negotiations between France and Germany are mischievous inventions without the faintest foundation in fact.”

(*Spectator*, July 29th, 1911.)

It was, however, Mr. Lloyd George’s famous speech at the Mansion House which, as we now know, caused such perturbation to Germany that this country trembled on the verge of war. The great Railway Strike, planned for the beginning of August, was, as noted in the last chapter, stopped after the first few days by mutual arrangement,

owing to the gravity of the Continental situation. A conference between Germany and France was arranged, and negotiations with regard to an exchange of territories in Africa resulted in November in a peaceful settlement.

In the hope of bringing to pass a better state of feeling between Germany and Great Britain, Lord Haldane accepted a mission to Germany in the spring of 1912. The German Emperor showed him the new Navy Bill, which added enormously to the German Navy. The necessary consequence of this was greater additions to our Navy Estimates and the concentrating of the British Fleet in home waters, leaving a greater burden of responsibility in the Mediterranean to France.

In the year 1912-13 the Italian-Turkish War and the two Balkan Wars indicated the danger of the European situation. Of the Treaty of Bukharest, signed in August 1913, St. Loe wrote: "Only one Great Power is conspicuously restless, and that is Austria-Hungary."

Mention has been made in earlier chapters of St. Loe's efforts in the matter of Village Rifle Clubs and of the rapid training of soldiers in the *Spectator* Experimental Company. These measures were directly connected with the question of the defence of the country—a question which St. Loe was of opinion would inevitably be tested before the first twenty years of the century had passed. A brief history of two further means of defence as they affected our lives seems now to be necessary—the formation of the Reserve of Veterans, later the National Reserve, of which St. Loe was the moving spirit, and the institution of the Red Cross Society in Great Britain, in which I was able to give a little help in the branch which was formed in the county of Surrey. It had always seemed to St. Loe that it was the height of folly to train men as soldiers for

four or five years and then to lose touch with them altogether. At various times from the year 1900 onwards he ventilated the subject in articles in the *Spectator*, advocating the formation of what he called “ a reservoir of trained men to be drawn upon in moments of national emergency.” During the inspection which Mr. Haldane made of the Surrey Rifle Clubs in 1906 they must have spoken of the idea, for in September 1907 Mr. Haldane writes :

“ The idea of a reserve of names—such as you and I spoke of when I stayed with you a year ago—is one that may be fitted in to the new organisation ” [the County Territorial Associations]. “ When we get back to London I should like to talk to you about it.”

As soon as the Territorial Associations were formed, St. Loe realised that here was an instrument for carrying out this scheme. He was co-opted on to the Surrey Association and approached them with his idea, but was asked by the Chairman, who was extremely sympathetic, to say nothing for some months whilst the organisation was getting into shape. In the spring of 1909 the Surrey Association thought the time had come to form a Register, and addressed itself to the work. St. Loe, in a memorandum which he drew up at the beginning of the War on the genesis of the National Reserve, described as follows the Association’s difficulties :

“ The task at first seemed almost hopeless. How were the men to be found ? The names and addresses of the men who had passed out of the Army Reserve and of the Militia had never been registered by the War Office, and the same fatal facility for not keeping in touch with the men they had trained had been observed at the old Volunteer headquarters. Practically there were no names

and addresses of trained men to be obtained from any official source. This would have daunted most people, but the Surrey Territorial Association was not to be daunted. Instead of abandoning the idea of a National Reserve, they determined to appeal through the Surrey newspapers to the trained men resident in the county. In letters published in all the Surrey newspapers the President and Chairman of the Association asked all trained men not then connected with any unit to send their names and addresses to the Secretary of the Association. Almost at once the postcards and letters began to pour in, and by the end of the summer 700 or 800 men had registered their names."

This, of course, was in Surrey alone. The War Office immediately recognised the existence of the Surrey Veteran Reserve, and most kindly allowed the Surrey Association the use of the Horse Guards Parade, in which on Waterloo Day, 1910, a parade of the Reserve was arranged. About 1,300 men were present, the Secretary of State for War addressed them, and they were inspected by the military authorities.

In the following year (1911) an inspection of the Veterans (whose average age turned out to be between 30 and 40) was held by Lord Roberts in the meadows of Millmead House, Guildford, the numbers by that time totalling nearly 3,000. St. Loe always said that, next to the credit being due to the Territorial Association and its Chairman, President and Officers, the help given by the Surrey newspapers was the most essential. The finance of those two parades was, of course, arranged by St. Loe.

In 1912, the London Reserve having reached large numbers, His Majesty the King inspected them in June

in Hyde Park. By the following year Colonel Seely, who was then Secretary of State for War, adopted a scheme under which the men of the National Reserve were asked to register themselves in two classes : (1) Those men under 45 years of age who would undertake to come up for overseas service in the event of war, and (2) those men who would undertake to come up for home service, also in case of an outbreak of war. As will be seen in the next chapter, this had an extremely important bearing on the question of the men raised in the country in 1914.

Meanwhile, I was playing a small part in the organisation of the Surrey Branch of the British Red Cross Society. In the summer of 1909 Mr. Haldane came to lunch with us in Queen Anne’s Gate, and spoke of the new organisations which were being planned under the British Red Cross Society, called Voluntary Aid Detachments. The *cadre* of these was, of course, settled by the War Office, but Mr. Haldane said he had had certain difficulties both with the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Help Society, who thought that they would have entire charge of the wounded in case of war, and with the St. John’s Ambulance Brigade, who were the official attendants of civilian casualties in times of peace. Matters, however, were finally arranged, both the Red Cross Society and the St. John’s Brigade were authorised to raise detachments, and branches of the Red Cross Society were established in every county, with the wife of the Lord-Lieutenant as President. At a meeting at Denbies in the summer of 1910 Mrs. Cubitt asked me to be Vice-President of the small district of Albury and Shere, where two detachments, a men’s and a women’s, were subsequently raised. Our object was to fit up a village hall, or some such building, as an emergency hospital in case of invasion, and

we were told to make arrangements for the provision at two days' notice of from thirty to forty beds with all necessary equipment. Besides the training of detachments for service, I thought it best to form a District Committee to take charge of the provision of equipment, with a District Representative for every village in the Division. Each District Representative visited the houses in her village and made a list in triplicate of the goods promised to be lent in case of emergency. These goods were annually inspected, the form was signed by the lender, one copy retained by her, the second sent to the Quartermaster of Surrey 10 (Women's Detachment), and the third kept by the District Representative. Besides our official War Office inspection, the combined Women's Detachments of Albury, Shere and Guildford were on duty in a tent hospital during Lord Roberts' inspection of the Surrey National Reserve on Saturday, May 20th, 1911, at Millmead. I note in my Annual Report that a casualty occurred and was duly treated. A scheme of training for the detachments was drawn up in consultation with the Commandants. Throughout the county, as throughout the country, the Red Cross was actively forming its detachments, the organisation of which, as it will be remembered, stood the strain of the War. Although it was the private houses of England, and not the village halls, which were turned into hospitals, the training in improvisation and the elements of Red Cross duty proved of infinite service to the wounded in the course of the following five years.

CHAPTER XII

1914—BEFORE THE WAR

In the mind of every man and woman who had reached adult life in 1914, the year is sharply divided into two portions : the first to the end of July, and the second—what followed after. It is in connection with the earlier section that I must chronicle our last sight of Mr. Roosevelt. The Lees had that summer just got into Chequers Court, and there they gave a most interesting small week-end party, of which Mr. Roosevelt was the dominant figure. His talk was as interesting and as full of vigour as ever, although in his travels in Central America he had been desperately ill. I remember, too, that that week-end was the last time that I ever met Lord Roberts, for he came over on Sunday afternoon, and together we walked up a little knoll, part of the Buckinghamshire escarpment of the Chilterns, and surveyed the marvellous panorama from the top. Included in the party was the then Captain, now Sir Frederick, Sykes, who talked of flying, and this reminds me of another delightful experience which St. Loe had in that summer. One morning in June Major Maitland of the Flying Corps, who later was killed in the airship R. 38, flew over to Newlands in the little flying-ship the *Beta* and came to breakfast. I shall never forget the *Beta* hovering over the trees at the bottom of the garden. A huge motor-car full of mechanics came with her, and she was brought to rest in our big field. Later St. Loe, who was made to put on a military cap, was taken on a

most unofficial short flight, seeing for the first time the familiar home landscape as the birds see it. Needless to say, he enjoyed it thoroughly and, as things turned out, it was to be his sole experience of the art of flying.

We had imagined that the feature for us of the year 1914 was that St. Loe was to act as Sheriff of the County of Surrey from March 1914 to March 1915. This ancient and honourable office, while retaining all its picturesqueness, had lost most of its functions. The Under Sheriff did the real work, and, although it nominally remained part of the duty of the Sheriff in case of invasion to raise a "general levy" of the population, St. Loe found that the only military obligation with which he was expected to comply, was the wearing of a Deputy-Lieutenant's uniform when he sat beside the Judge at Assizes. The "properties" and costumes proper to the office were intricate and costly. In the first place, an enormous coach like Cinderella's had to be hired, in which the Judge drove, escorted by the Sheriff, from the Judge's lodgings in the Assize town to the Court. As to this coach, St. Loe wrote to his brother that the panel, "thanks to your heraldic design, was very well painted. Also the two big silver eagles on the hammercloth looked exceedingly well. I am glad you made the family fowl so combative a beast." In certain counties javelin men were also provided to walk beside the coach, but fortunately this was not the case in Surrey. Two trumpeters, however, in what looked like a Georgian adaptation of a hunt costume, were in attendance on State occasions, with long silver trumpets on which they performed most melodiously. There were also two official footmen, who were like nothing so much as the fish footmen in *Alice in Wonderland*. They seemed to live in white knee-breeches and red and silver coats,

and when we had large entertainments, our own butler confided to me that they were of no sort of use for hard work. I must say I thought their costume forbade any work, but at any rate they looked extremely ornamental. But, greatly as we were amused by all this flummery, St. Loe determined that he would make his office bear some useful fruit. He wrote in April (1914) to Mr. Bonar Law :

“ I am this year Sheriff of Surrey and I am going to try and revive the connection of that ancient but decrepit office with national defence and am going to do my best to encourage all forms of national defence within the county.”

Our greatest effort was kept for a camp of the Surrey National Reserve at the end of May. Before that, however, both 14, Queen Anne's Gate and Newlands were the scenes of interesting gatherings, having for their object various forms of activities which might have been described as “ Works of National Importance ”—words with which we were to become familiar in the years that followed. The ball was set rolling by a large luncheon-party in Queen Anne's Gate, at which we asked all the important people of the Surrey County Branch of the Red Cross, together with a large number of the Headquarters Staff and others interested in the movement, to meet. I remember it as a very interesting occasion, and there was much exchange of views as to the action of the Red Cross in case of emergency, which was to prove only too useful about four months afterwards. In connection with the Red Cross, it was a curious coincidence that I spent a great many afternoons of that hot, busy summer studying R.A.M.C. Army forms. The War Office had allowed the use of Army forms to the Red Cross early in the spring,

and, after one glance at the puzzling array which I had purchased, I thought the best thing to do was to arrange a scheme for our annual Red Cross inspection, which would prove to the Commandants and Quartermasters how exceedingly difficult the forms were to handle. I accordingly got our very kind D.D.M.S., Surgeon-General Whitehead, to sanction my "scheme," which was that some "casualties" should be brought to the Village Hall at Albury and there treated for First Aid by the Albury and Shere Women's Detachment, Surrey/10, and then carried along the Tillingbourne Valley by the Men's Detachment, helped by the local Scouts, till they came to Chilworth Station. Here they were to be entrained by the Albury and Shere Men's Detachment, Surrey/15, in a railway-van kindly lent by what was then the South Eastern Railway Company. The point of these exercises was to give the Quartermaster's Department practice in keeping an eye on the kits of men who were out of action and unable to look after themselves. Needless to say, we got the Army forms into the most atrocious muddle, and I therefore applied to Surgeon-General Whitehead for lessons in the management of these exceedingly difficult documents. The matter was not easily settled, and an irreverent member of my detachment said, "It seems extremely easy to get advice from a Surgeon-General, but quite impossible to get lessons from a Quartermaster!" However, in the end General Whitehead most kindly lent me the services of a Quartermaster-Sergeant, who used to walk across the Horse Guards Parade in the afternoons to 14, Queen Anne's Gate, and together we arranged a series of lessons on the use of R.A.M.C. Army forms, which were to prove extremely useful.

The next form of National Defence which St. Loe wished

to encourage was a review of that picturesque and interesting Corps, the Surrey Guides, which had been instituted between the years 1910 and 1912 to carry out a scheme devised by a certain Colonel Davidson for "A System of Local Guides for Home Defence." The idea was to form "a body of men organised on such a basis that, collectively, they know every road, bridle-path, foot-path and track of any description in the county, and they can thus receive troops on the border of the county, pass them on from guide to guide, and forward their passage by the most suitable routes, through the county." (*Navy and Army*, April 3rd, 1915.) The name of the first Chief Guide was Colonel Watney, and St. Loe served as a Divisional Guide, having under him District Guides. The single qualification of the Guides was so complete a knowledge of the country under their charge that they could lead troops by day or by night in accordance with any requirements. It must be remembered that the organisation of the Auxiliary Societies, such as Red Cross units, County Guides, etc., was based on the assumption that the Great War, which most people felt to be inevitable, would start by the invasion of England.

On May 2nd, 1914, Major-General Sir William Robertson, then Director of Military Training at the War Office, inspected the Surrey Guides at Newlands. The review was an extremely picturesque proceeding, and a badge given by St. Loe, bearing a small *bas relief* of a figure of Mercury by John of Bologna, was handed to each man in the ranks by Sir William Robertson.

But St. Loe's most strenuous effort was to be made on behalf of the National Reserve. He had been for a long time thinking out his plans, and in February 1914 he wrote to Mr. Balfour :

“ I have got to be Sheriff of Surrey in the year which begins next Lady Day, and I want to mark my year of office by doing something to help on the National Reserve. Accordingly I am going to ask the pick of the Surrey National Reserve, amounting to about 1000 men, to come to a Camp here from Whit Saturday, May 30th, to Whit Monday. I live on the top of the North Downs, some 600 feet above the sea, and have fortunately got on this small plateau some very dry flat fields just suitable for a Camp. Seely is coming for that Saturday to Monday inspection, which is to take the form of a Church Parade, at which the Bishop of Winchester hopes to officiate, and an inspection and field exercise on the Monday. I think the event will be a very interesting one and will show the mettle of the men. 300 of them will have taken the obligation under Seely's new scheme to go abroad on mobilisation. . . . The rest of the men in the Camp will be men who have taken the Home service obligation.”

As matters turned out, Colonel Seely was unable to fulfil his engagement, because, owing to the crisis in Irish affairs, and especially to what was known as the “ Curragh Camp ” incident, he had tendered his resignation to Mr. Asquith at the end of March, and Mr. Asquith himself had taken charge of the War Office. Great was St. Loe's delight when he was able to induce Lord Roberts to make the inspection. He felt from that moment that the success of the Camp was assured. It was, indeed, not a small undertaking. We were to have between seven hundred and a thousand men under canvas from Saturday afternoon to Monday evening in the next field ; a Red Cross hospital was to be improvised by V. A. Detachments, Surrey/10 (Women) and Surrey/15 (Men), the house at

Newlands was to be filled with Major-Generals, an open-air service was to be conducted by the Bishop of Winchester on the Sunday afternoon, and everybody in the county was to be asked to tea afterwards. St. Loe decreed that the house-party was to be a bachelor one, but I pleaded for one woman to keep me company, and, as Mr. Arthur Lee was one of the first people we invited, his wife, who had been for so long one of my best friends, was induced to accompany him. Besides its serious interest, the fun of the thing was tremendous. It was glorious to wake up in the morning and see and hear the two trumpeters sounding the "Réveillé" from the little terrace in front of the house. I remember that Mrs. Lee and I could hardly believe that they were real and that so picturesque a ceremony could be arranged in twentieth century England. St. Loe wrote to Lord Roberts on May 11th, 1914 :

"The programme is as follows : You will arrive at Newlands at 1 p.m. This will give you time perhaps for an unofficial peep at the Camp before lunch, for it is in my own home field. Lunch will be at 1.30, when you will see the Bishop of Winchester, the Lord Lieutenant, General Elles, Arthur Lee, and a good many military officers, including my wife's brother, General Simpson, now commanding in the Mauritius. At 3 o'clock will be the service, which I hope the Bishop, according to my request, will keep to half an hour, but we have allowed thirty-five minutes. At 3.35 we want you to inspect my wife's two Voluntary Aid Detachments, one of men and one of women, who will have a hospital tent on the ground. I think you will be struck by their efficiency and good organisation. While you are inspecting them the ground will be cleared. This operation will take about a quarter

of an hour. Therefore at 3.50 we shall take you back to the saluting-post for the main event, the inspection and march past—for as you may imagine, the men are very anxious to march past you. After they are inspected and you have presented also a Cup which was won by a team of the Surrey National Reserve given by the County Association, we hope you will give a short address to the men. About half of them have, as I think you know, engaged for over-sea service, just as I am sure, if we had universal service here, we should always have a large number of trained men who would voluntarily register themselves for over-sea service. The rest of the men have all given an absolute obligation for Home defence.

“These proceedings we consider could easily be got in so as to finish not later than 4.30. Then, as I have said, you can either go straight to your car, or, if you feel tired, have a cup of tea. I do not mean to worry you by bringing up all sorts of people to be introduced, but there will be a certain number of your old friends on the ground, like Elles, Gaselee, Hugh Barnes, Midleton and others. The War Office people who will be in my house-party are the new Adjutant-General, Sclater, General Bethune, and also General Grierson, in whose command we geographically are.

“I should like to say once more how very grateful we are to you for coming to us. I am sure you will agree that the National Reservists deserve recognition for their public spirit. It shows, as I always say, what a school of patriotism the army is.”

As may be imagined, St. Loe would not have been able to organise the Camp without the help of the County Territorial Association, who most kindly carried out the

arrangements and made contracts for supplies, tents, etc. The moving spirit was Major, later Brigadier-General, Scudamore, to whose unfailing tact, good humour and energy I know St. Loe always thought the success of the Camp was due. The Hospital Tent was also quite successful, the out-patients' department for the treatment of small casualties being the busiest. But an out-patients' department would certainly not have been sufficient, for half-an-hour after the men had come into camp on the Saturday afternoon, a Reservist, in a rough-and-tumble with one of his fellows, sprained his ankle very badly and spent the whole three days in bed under the care of the Red Cross.

The programme for the week-end did not end with the Sunday inspection. June 1st, being Whit Monday, St. Loe had arranged to have a "field exercise." He described his plan to Lord Esher, who unfortunately at the last moment was prevented from coming, as follows :

"In some ways Monday might prove the most interesting day. We shall not have the county bigwigs and a general crowd then, but we mean to have a small field exercise, under which the National Reservists will put up an outpost line to protect their camp, and the Surrey Guides will endeavour to break through their line and destroy the reservoir which stands in one of my fields. It ought to prove interesting and amusing."

I find the following "General Idea" for the field exercise :

"A state of war exists between the Red Army (Sheriff's Command) and the White invading Army (National Reserve Battalion).

"The G.O.C. commanding the White force at Woking

attaches great importance to preserving the reservoir at Newlands Corner from destruction, and has detached a battalion to hold the hill-top and guard the reservoir from attack.

“The G.O.C. commanding the Red Army, headquarters Dorking, has ordered a body of Local Guides, supported by a company of Infantry, to work their way through concealed woodland paths and destroy the water works.

“Operations begin at 10.15 a.m. The White Force must not leave the camp field till 9.30 a.m. The attacking force must be at no point nearer to Newlands House than one mile and a half when operations begin at 10.15 a.m.”

About eight weeks after this field exercise, men of the National Reserve were actually on duty guarding the above-mentioned reservoir. For months a small force of the Reservists stationed at the waterworks below the hill sent up sentries to the reservoir near our house, and it was extremely startling, when one took a walk through the fields, to find a sentry in full service kit intent on presenting arms correctly.

It is difficult to say which of the crowded incidents of the week-end was the most picturesque. The most impressive was the service held by the Bishop of Winchester on a small platform in the middle of the camp, with the mass singing of the hymns; but an almost equally striking incident was the address by Lord Roberts, for this occasion was one of his last public appearances, if not his very last, before the beginning of the War. After pointing out the fact that thirteen thousand Reservists in Great Britain had already undertaken service with the

Army overseas should they be needed, and that forty-five thousand had expressed their willingness to return to the ranks, if required to repel an invasion, Lord Roberts concluded his address as follows :

“ I need not tell you old soldiers how proud I am of your glorious achievements in the past and of the loyal and patriotic example you are now setting to your civilian neighbours. It is a real pleasure to me to be with you to-day, and, as your Colonel-in-Chief, to thank you for the soldier-like manner in which you have shown your readiness to come forward and do your duty as men, should the safety of this country ever be threatened.”

(*Spectator*, June 6th, 1914.)

The most important feature of the Camp was, however, the presence of General Sclater, the Adjutant-General, who had only just taken office. As St. Loe wrote later in a memorandum on the Reserve :

“ This turned out to be a most fortunate event, as owing to General Sclater and also Lord Kitchener both having been in India during the formation of the Reserve, they would have been almost entirely unaware of its existence and its possibilities, had not General Sclater actually seen the men paraded at Newlands Corner. He was able, as he himself stated, to tell Lord Kitchener how important was the national asset provided by the National Reserve which existed in every county in Britain. When war broke out, the response made in Surrey, and indeed throughout the United Kingdom, was very remarkable, but very little impression was made upon the public mind, as the National Reserve ceased to exist on mobilisation, the men being at once drafted off into other bodies.”

It was calculated that between thirty and forty thousand men who had taken the overseas obligation joined the Special Reserve, and that the men of Class II. were employed in many thousands guarding all vulnerable points, such as munition-factories, water-works, railway and other bridges.

Besides his activities as Sheriff, St. Loe this summer was, of course, particularly busy in the *Spectator* over Irish affairs. Crisis after crisis occurred in the struggle between the extreme Nationalist view and the Ulstermen's determination not to live under the rule of a Dublin Parliament. It will be remembered that the last General Election had left the Irish Nationalist members in a position in which they could exercise great pressure on the Government. The Home Rule Bill had already twice been presented and twice rejected by the House of Lords, and the Session which opened in February 1914 was the crucial session in which the Bill could become law without the assent of the Second Chamber. The struggle of the Session turned on the exclusion of Ulster, and the wildest proposals were made as to the action of the House of Lords and the advice they should give to the Crown in the event of a Bill including Ulster being presented. As early as the beginning of March great hopes were entertained that some agreement on exclusion would be arrived at. On March 17th the *Spectator*, which had for years advocated the exclusion of Ulster from any Dublin Parliament, set forth in detail the amendments to the Government of Ireland Bill which would be required in order to exclude the six northern counties from the operation of the Bill and allow them to remain within the United Kingdom and under the Parliament of Westminster. A reminder of this was published as a note in the

issue of June 10th, 1916, together with the information that "the draft was made by a distinguished Parliamentary draftsman, and from the technical side has stood the test of criticism." Unfortunately, however, the enrolling both of the Ulster and the National Volunteers inflamed matters to such an extent that the situation looked desperate. The *Spectator*, on June 13th, 1914, denounced "such a monstrous dereliction of the duty of Government" which had "allowed two huge bodies of armed men to grow up in a country where, even without the stimulus of arms and organisation, there is always the danger of physical conflict." The "Curragh Camp" incident led to the resignation of Colonel Seely and to Mr. Asquith himself becoming Minister of War. An Amending Bill to the Home Rule Bill was introduced by the Government into the House of Lords, and at the end of July a conference of political leaders was summoned by the King to meet in Buckingham Palace to discuss the Irish question.

In the heat excited by Irish affairs the full significance of the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife on Sunday, June 28th, was hardly realised. It was not till July 25th that the *Spectator* sounded a grave note of warning, and even as late as July 29th Lord Cromer wrote to St. Loe :

"My belief that we are not on the eve of Armageddon is based upon the fact that, so far as can be gathered, the Germans are not bent on war, and that is the real danger. Under the tuition of Bismarck they have become adept in raising a political hurricane and making the world believe that others are responsible for doing so. This is what they did in 1866 and again in 1870, and if they are

bent on the same game now, war is a certainty. But it rather looks as if such was not the case. I hope I may be right. The Russian Government appears to me up to the present time to have behaved with great circumspection and deliberation."

The details of the European crisis have been given too recently and in too many authoritative memoirs to bear repetition. I remember that by Sunday, July 26th, St. Loe was taking an extremely grave view of the situation, though still hoping that the war might be averted. After that, as everyone knows, events happened with lightning rapidity. We were at Newlands on Sunday, August 2nd, and spent the whole day trying to get news on the telephone. In the afternoon Lord and Lady Onslow came to see us, and Sir Edmond Elles came up to discuss what would be likely to be required of us all as to Red Cross action. In the evening we heard news both of the mobilisation of the Fleet and of the German ultimatum to Belgium, and the next day the Government sent an ultimatum to Germany requiring her to respect Belgian neutrality, the time allowed for an answer expiring at 11 o'clock, British time, midnight, German, on Tuesday, August 4th. No one dared to hope that Germany would comply. Just as evening was closing in on Tuesday afternoon, we saw a motor-car with two officers in it climbing Clandon hill. They stopped, and our friend Major Maitland of the Flying Corps, who was going over from Aldershot to Kent, asked if he and his companion could come in and have some food. We hastened to provide them with something, and after a quick meal and a discussion of the events of the next few hours they passed on their way at about nine o'clock. At eleven the country was at war.

PART III

THE WAR AND AFTER

CHAPTER I

THE NEWLANDS CORNER HOSPITAL, 1914-19

"It was evident to him [Lord Grey] and to me [Lord Haldane] that the country would almost certainly be unable to keep out of the War. We had arrived at this conclusion on somewhat different grounds. He felt what we owed to France, and that our national interest was bound up with her preservation. I thought, from my study of the German General Staff, that once the German war party had got into the saddle and the sword had been drawn from the scabbard, it would be a war not merely for the overthrow of France and Russia, but for the domination of the world. I knew that if we kept out and allowed Germany to get possession, even for a time, of the north-eastern shores of France, our turn would come later, and that we should be in the greatest peril, our Navy notwithstanding, and that we might go down, without a friend in the world, under a tremendous combination against us."—LORD HALDANE'S Autobiography.

Thackeray, in the second volume of *Vanity Fair*, having got his characters to Belgium and chronicled the historic ball on the eve of Waterloo, states that he has no "claim to rank among the military novelists. Our place is with the non-combatants. When the decks are cleared for action, we go below and wait meekly." On the same principle, in this and the following chapters I propose to speak of the Great War merely as it affected us personally. In that month of August, 1914, St. Loe and I were beginning to be elderly people. He was in the middle fifties, and I only six years younger. Therefore auxiliary service was all we could offer, and that we hastened to give.

St. Loe, holding, as he did, that it was part of the

Sheriff's duty to facilitate a general levy of the population for the defence of the country, at once busied himself with recruiting meetings, and I, of course, was bound to take my place among the Red Cross workers and to test the efficiency of the local organisation with which we had all been so busy for the previous four years.

And here for once I find myself able to deal with one of those "unwritten chapters" which in *The Adventure of Living* St. Loe says he so deeply regrets not having given—the history of the Newlands Corner Hospital. As soon as the battle of the Marne had been fought, it became obvious that the pressing medical problem before the country was not the establishment of emergency hospitals such as would have been required in the case of invasion, but second line hospitals and convalescent homes for the wounded, with whom, in all too short a time, the Military and Territorial hospitals were overcrowded. As Lady Rowley, the Vice-President of Guildford, and Lady Onslow, at Clandon Park, very soon decided to open large hospitals, I hardly thought that Newlands would be wanted, but I soon found that beds for convalescents might be in request. I was advised that the best thing to do was to make a list of those houses in the Albury and Shere Red Cross Division which would receive one or two convalescents when required. I assembled the Divisional Committee and informed them that I had been told that plenty of notice would be given and that the convalescents would only arrive in twos and threes. A list of willing hostesses was drawn up, and then, with the aid of two delightful trained nurses who volunteered their services, we proceeded to give the Women's Detachment (Surrey/10) as much training in the routine of hospital work as was possible, using for this purpose our spare rooms at

Newlands. Both Detachments, also, took advantage of the lessons in Army forms which had been given me throughout the summer, while two or three of the members of the Women's Detachment did actual training in the hospitals of the neighbourhood. In October my daughter, who was among these probationers, contributed a most interesting and entertaining account of this training to the *Spectator*. In this she summed up the conclusions and experiences of herself and her colleague in the following paragraph, which will be of interest to present-day Red Cross V.A.D.'s:

“(1) That our previous Red Cross theoretical training has been invaluable in helping us to pick up the work quickly. We felt that owing to it we were quite prepared after a fortnight to compete with the other pros, most of whom had been in the hospital for six months, and that on the whole we probably knew more about the actual dressings than they did.

“(2) That our fortnight's practice had been of the greatest value in giving us confidence in ourselves, and also in making us quicker with the work. We had been lamentably slow at first in such things as sweeping floors, cutting bread and butter, and even in making beds.”

On the morning of October 7th the telephone bell rang, and I was asked whether the Albury and Shere Division could receive thirty Belgian convalescents from the Bevan Hospital at Folkestone, who must be evacuated that afternoon. Nothing, of course, was ready, and the coming and going of emergency messages to the various hostesses of the Division may be imagined; but at last, in the late afternoon, we had assembled both Detachments (Surrey/10, Women, and /15, Men), a contingent of monks from the

monastery of Chilworth, who I thought would make the Belgians feel at home, and half the population of the village of Shere, at Gomshall Station. No patients came at all. We waited the whole evening, telephoning to Folkestone, and being constantly assured that the convalescents were coming, once even that they had started, and that the train would be in between eleven and midnight. Hot coffee, etc., was hastily organised, and we all stayed at the station till two in the morning, when we were told that there were no more trains on the line. The only excitement was an empty hospital train, which, brilliantly illuminated, dashed through the station. Our train had been diverted at a junction to another auxiliary hospital, and our thirty patients did not arrive till early the following week. We all stood ready through the intervening days, and finally, on October 19th, the Detachments, the monks and the hostesses having assembled again, the Belgian convalescents duly arrived. They were certainly most of them very ill, but it was with rheumatism, to which, they later assured me, they were subject in the autumn, and not with wounds. Their tattered and nondescript regimentals were in the same state as that in which they had been evacuated from the Belgian hospitals ; but fortunately among the Men's Detachment was an old soldier who knew all about the disinfection of regimentals, and when a telegram arrived from the Commandant of the Bevan hospital saying that their garments required fumigation—a fact which was obvious to more senses than one—I was able to reply that that matter had already been attended to.

The Belgians stayed in the Albury and Shere Division till the following spring, and many were the episodes which arose in connection with them. The two most

striking were, first, the advent of a gentleman whom the A.D.M.S. of the Southern Command would persist in alluding to as "Mr. Boglo." His name in the "nominal roll" sent with the patients was Camille Bolofe, and he was an enormous black savage from the Belgian Congo, who had at one time had a sprained ankle, but by the time he arrived at Shere was unfortunately completely well. "Where is the black man to go?" said one of the V.A.D.'s to me as we left Gomshall Station. I was all too certain that I should have to take him myself, and accordingly we put him into the car for Newlands Corner. He was not a pleasant inmate. He had an enormous long knife, which he persisted in keeping concealed under his bed-clothes, and he pinned my daughter in between two beds when she insisted on removing it. His conversation in abominable French was both alarming and picturesque. "*Dans mon pays pas de prisonniers—coupe !* (with a dramatic gesture as one cutting a throat)—*mange !*" And the temperature of every Belgian patient went up like a skyrocket ! I was thought very poor-spirited for ringing up next morning to St. Loe, who was in London, and asking him to go to the Belgian Legation and arrange to deliver us from "Mr. Boglo." He was escorted to town by the Commandant of the Men's Detachment, and the village constable saw them safely into the train. Fortunately, he was much flattered at thinking his services were instantly required again at the Front. St. Loe wrote to Lord Cromer a few days afterwards :

"What an astonishing thing war is. Who would have thought that some weeks after it had begun the wave would have cast up a Congo savage, possibly a cannibal, into my best bed-room !"

A vivid account of the sayings of Camille "Boglo," together with certain distinctly entertaining anecdotes of the other Belgian patients, was contributed to the *Spectator* of June 12th, 1915, by one of the V.A.D.'s on the Staff. I have a shrewd idea who wrote it, but it was signed "Melinda Harris," and no such name appeared on the rolls of the establishment.

The other episode which dwells in my mind is the dramatic account of the evacuation of the Antwerp hospitals, given by a certain Sous-Officier, who was always known by his soubriquet "Pap-pa." He told how, with a bad wound in his leg, he had hobbled in each town he passed through from hospital to hospital, only to be told, "*Pas de place—pas de place*," till at last, arriving at Ostend, two benevolent English people got him on board a boat for Folkestone. I did not put entire reliance in his statements, but the story corroborated by the other patients was sufficiently dreadful. "Pap-pa" was the hero of the only hunger strike we ever had to deal with. He was incurably quarrelsome, and, to give the other patients a rest, he was condemned to remain upstairs for a few days after some particularly flagrant outbreak. Whereupon he announced that he was about to go on hunger strike. It was very awkward ; it is impossible to allow a sick man to starve himself, and extremely difficult to release him from his room in consequence of a threat ; so I got hold of the "Pro" whose duty it was to carry round the meals for the men who for various reasons could not come down, and I instructed her to get the most savoury soup she could, particularly at supper, and to leave a very full bowl casually in "Pap-pa's" ward. The bowl next morning was mysteriously found empty, and "Pap-pa" finished his three days of detention without getting perceptibly thinner !

The natural reaction to receiving a number of rheumatic patients was to get hold of a masseuse, and accordingly, the day after the patients arrived I communicated with the South-Western Polytechnic, of which I had been for many years a Governor, and induced the authorities to let me have a masseuse, who had just finished her course at the admirable Chelsea Physical Training College, to help with my Belgian patients. They sent me Miss Edith Brock for a ten days' stay, which stretched to four years. As soon as the Newlands Corner Hospital was used by our own Command—the Eastern Command—it was made into a hospital for massage and electrical treatment, and Miss Brock, as head of the room, nicknamed by the irreverent “the Knocks and Shocks Department,” did such good work that at the end of the War she received the M.B.E. In our last phase as a convalescent home the discipline was considerably tried by our being sent, mixed up with the Belgians, a contingent of convalescent British enteric cases, who, having passed all but their final tests, appeared to be perfectly well and yet, for fear of infection, had to be kept segregated for many weeks. From my point of view, no greater trial could have been given to an inexperienced Commandant. The first batch of patients, apparently in rude health, arrived in charge of the very magnificent sergeant of an Irish regiment, who in his first interview with me demanded week-end passes for himself and his party. I was obliged to tell him that the whole reason of the segregation would be lost if the patients mixed with the civilian population, and great was my relief when the sergeant saw the point and answered for himself and the other men. We were not obliged to keep these trying cases long. After we had opened on April 19th as an Auxiliary Hospital—duly registered by the

B.R.C.S. as a Red Cross Hospital—the new batch of enterics whom we received were gradually evacuated and the house filled with surgical cases. We served directly under Colonel R. J. S. Simpson, C.B., the A.D.M.S. of the Eastern Command, whose headquarters were in the Royal Herbert Hospital. Colonel Simpson inspected the hospital in the early spring, and it was opened on April 19th. I feel I must break my rule of not commenting on living people to express my gratitude for the kindness and consideration which we all received from Colonel Simpson during the four years during which we were under his orders, and, indeed, ever since, for the friendship which was founded in the Newlands Corner Hospital has put at my disposal his guidance and direction in many of the Red Cross activities in which I have been engaged since the end of the War. I owe him an even greater debt, for in the dark days which were to come in 1917–18, when St. Loe was first attacked by the disease which subsequently killed him, it was Colonel Simpson who recommended him to consult Dr. William Hunter, whose care and skill restored him for a time to health and gave him another ten years of active life.

By the summer of 1915 we were filled with surgical cases. Very soon the number of beds outgrew the capacity of the house, and various friends presented us with, at first two, and later with more, revolving shelters, in which open-air treatment was carried on even during the winter. These grew and grew, till from twenty-two beds the Newlands Corner Hospital finally included over forty, and the double row of shelters in the orchard presented an extremely handsome appearance. I was entertained one morning to see that the patients had put up a directing-post at the beginning of the little street of shelters with

“Paradise Row” printed on it in large letters. The medical side of the hospital was conducted by the Medical Officer of Surrey/10, Dr. I. R. Cory, to whose unstinted devotion we owed much gratitude, and we always had an admirably trained Sister-in-Charge. After the first few months Lord Knutsford most kindly sent us Sisters from the London Hospital, and it is impossible to speak too highly of the skill which they displayed both in the treatment of the wounds and in the training of the V.A.D.’s.

It was not very long before I saw that in a hospital for soldiers conducted entirely by women—for Dr. Cory was not resident—it was necessary to invent some disciplinary organisation. St. Loe was so much in London that he insisted when he was at home on regarding himself as a guest in his own house and took no part in the running of the hospital. I therefore made the senior N.C.O. for the time being into a sort of adjutant, seeing him every morning and making him responsible for the conduct of the patients. When I think over the N.C.O.’s who helped me in this way I cannot but be grateful for the patience which they displayed. Considering that they could not be selected by merit, but by rank and seniority both in the Army and in the hospital, it is marvellous to reflect on the level of efficiency which they attained, though, of course, such difficulties as I encountered went up and down with the efficiency of my senior N.C.O. The astonishing circumstance was that, in spite of the ever-changing patients, the hospital soon became an entity of its own and law and order were correspondingly easier to maintain. Towards the year 1918 the public opinion of the patients became so strong that it was extremely difficult for anybody to misbehave seriously. That sort of thing simply was “not

done" at Newlands Corner! The patients, too, were most particular about their clothes. When they were asked out to tea, there was a tremendous brushing, ironing and general preparation of their blue hospital suits. I am sure some of them went so far as to pipeclay the white revers, and certainly when they set forth on a junketing in the ambulance they looked extremely smart. The Pack Store Department had many troubles, but carelessness on the part of the men was not one of them.

It was during the early months of the hospital—that is, in October, 1915—that the most exciting incident in our annals took place. On the night of October 15th, 1915, St. Loe had gone to London, taking with him our daughter on a short leave from her duties as a V.A.D. The twenty-four beds of the hospital were full of British soldiers, among whom was a specially large proportion of shell-shock and gas patients, the latter being, some in revolving huts, and a few in a great tent which had been put up for their benefit in the garden. No one who has not suddenly trebled the number of people their house is supposed to hold can possibly imagine how many domestic apparatuses have to be coaxed and propped up so that they may do extra duty. We had doubled our drainage in the spring but had just begun to have trouble about the hot water. Our water is very hard, and leaves a deposit which must be scraped off the boiler at stated intervals, and these intervals had, of course, diminished by half. The kitchen boiler, therefore, had to be scraped out, and the plumbers employed by Messrs. King & Company of Abinger, who were our builders, had themselves proposed that, in order not to disturb the patients, this scraping of the boiler should always be done at night. Two of them

accordingly came up to the hospital a little before ten o'clock. Shortly after ten o'clock, the fire having been let out after the evening baths, I was expecting the noise of the boiler scraping to begin, when I received a message from Private W., our worse shell-shock case, that he was very much alarmed by a noise which he was sure was aircraft. I went into Ward H to reassure him, and wondered as I passed along the passage why the plumbers were making a noise like a distant but gigantic sewing-machine. I entered into my soothing explanations, but Private W. would have none of them and declared that he had heard aircraft too often and that the noise was that of a Zeppelin. Hardly had I suggested that no Zeppelin would find it worth while to be in the neighbourhood than I remembered the Chilworth gunpowder factory at the foot of St. Martha's hill, two miles away. I knew that at that moment an enormous amount of material for filling high explosive shells was stored in the factory, and no one could possibly predict what the effect of an explosion of hundreds of tons of this material might be. If enemy aircraft were looking for the factory and got a direct hit, not only the hospital, but the town of Guildford, two miles on the other side of the works, would probably be blown to pieces. The noise grew louder, and the Sister-in-Charge came in to say that the patients in the huts could see a Zeppelin coming over from the east. We got in all the men from the garden and put out every glimmer of light in the house. I went into the biggest ward to watch, reflecting that neither Sister nor any of the patients knew the local geography, and that therefore they would not realise that not only would it be possible for the house itself to be bombed, but that a terrible disaster would occur if the powder-works were found. On

came the Zeppelin, flying so low over the house that she looked almost the size of a small steamer. There were long moments of suspense. She was heading due west. A turn to the south and we were lost. A very cool and gallant Lance-Corporal of the Guards stood by me, quite unconscious of the extent of the danger. The Zeppelin slowed, hesitated like a person trying to find the right road, and then turned slowly to the *north*. The gunpowder works, nestled in their woods, had kept their secret. The Lance-Corporal observed that she looked as if she had lost her way, but with my fuller knowledge I thought that what had happened was that she had not found it. Near Guildford there are two isolated chapels, one (in ruins) dedicated to St. Catherine, standing by the River Wey, and the other, St. Martha's, standing whole and entire on the hill at the bottom of which was the powder-works. The Zeppelin, I think, took St. Catherine's for St. Martha's, for presently we heard her bombing the nursery gardens and greenhouses near the river. We found out afterwards that the only thing she had killed was one swan on the River Wey. There was a little anti-aircraft gun at Chilworth, which set up a continual barking, and, feeling that we did not know what might happen next, Sister and I, on the advice of a scientifically minded Corporal, assembled the whole of the patients in the Great Parlour, where we sat in total darkness for about half an hour, singing songs and telling stories, I watching the red glare of the enemy bombs and flares behind the trees to the north-west, where I had so often watched the glow of the sunset. Presently, much higher and fainter, we heard the renewed whirr of the Zeppelin as she flew back and hovered over Newlands Corner till nearly eleven o'clock. She was barely visible, but the

noise was very audible. I note in a report which I wrote to the Chief Constable of Surrey next day that our fear of light was so great that we escorted the patients downstairs by the glimmer of one very small electric torch. The servants, who had no duties towards the patients, and therefore could watch what was going on, told us that the Zeppelin seemed to make dives into the valley and drop great lights, and then to swoop back into the air and hover over the Corner very high up. Finally, some time after eleven, she disappeared to the south. About midnight we got the patients back to bed, administering hot lemonade or hot cocoa, and even the shell-shocks slept astonishingly well. I confess that I did not go to bed, for I was a little afraid that the Zeppelin might come back. After the raid no further store of gunpowder was kept at the Chilworth works, each day's product being sent away immediately. St. Martha's Chapel also was camouflaged with the tops of fir-trees, so that for about a year the view from Newlands Corner looked quite unfamiliar. In the morning, forgetful of the fact that not a word about the strayed Zeppelin would be allowed to be published, I rang up St. Loe, who, I thought, might be anxious. He said, "Oh, you have heard that there was a raid in London, have you? Amabel and I are quite safe." I answered that I was thankful to hear it, but what I rang up for was to tell him about *our* raid, not to hear about *his*. This was the only time we sighted enemy aircraft in the hospital, though later our own aeroplanes streamed over the hill flying from north-west to south-east, winging their way, some high, some low, all outward bound on the air road to France.

All those members of Surrey/10 who had not volunteered for overseas service were absorbed by their local

hospital. Our energetic and devoted Quartermaster, Miss Eva Scott, organised the Albury and Shere Workrooms at Shere. Here not only were our major repairs to goods and linen undertaken, but an immense quantity of goods were actually made and sent to other hospitals both at home and overseas. Our minor repairs were looked after by a band of the elder V.A.D.'s, who for four years came regularly on one afternoon a week and darned and patched the hospital suits and linen.

Meanwhile, the Men's Detachment, Surrey/15, under its able Commandant, Mr. Gerald Metcalfe, besides furnishing orderlies, was largely occupied with convoy duty for the neighbouring hospitals in Guildford and Clandon. These, naturally enough, very often coincided with the reception of patients at our hospital, and as we had only one ambulance, a chassis belonging to us which had been converted in the early part of the War, it was sometimes difficult to fit things in. However, the convoys usually arrived in the middle of the night, while the patients evacuated to Newlands by the War and County Hospitals at Guildford were, of course, moved at a less trying hour. I do not think anyone who did not see the V.A.D.'s at work quite realised the amount of self-sacrificing drudgery which was effected by both sexes during the four and a half years of the War. The women, as far as their strength allowed, gave up their whole lives, while the men—most of them, of course, elderly—who had to earn their bread, unhesitatingly responded to heavy night work when the long hospital trains came into Guildford station. Many scenes of bustle were enacted in the villages, for it seemed impossible to tell when the hospital trains were coming, and contradictory messages used to be received that the train was expected in three hours, two

hours, or half an hour. However, I do not think the Albury and Shere Ambulance was ever very late, in spite of the difficulties of conveying a message first by telephone to me, and then down into the Tillingbourne valley where the Detachment lived, many members not being on the telephone. And here I feel I must pay a tribute to the staff of the Guildford Telephone Service. Without their unfailing courtesy and efficiency the local auxiliary hospitals would indeed have been handicapped. Every operator at the Guildford Exchange seemed anxious to do her best to facilitate our very tiresome and contradictory calls, some of them involving particularly troublesome trunk calls. One had only to say "Red Cross Hospital call, Urgent" and one seemed to be put through with miraculous accuracy and dispatch.

As time went on, the feeding of the hospital became, of course, extremely difficult. In the early days it was possible to feed both patients and staff adequately, and, indeed, a rumour of the Newlands Corner Wednesday night supper, which was "fried fish and chips," went round the wards of the Guildford Hospital and the Royal Herbert Hospital at Woolwich, and it was not only eagerly expected by the incoming patients, but lamented by the outgoing. "Send me to-morrow night's supper by post, Sister," said the unfortunates who were being discharged on a Tuesday. But with the rationing of the patients, which took place some months after the rationing of the staff, these delights came to an end, and the clerical and kitchen staff had a terrible time with the food tickets of the civilian inmates and the allowances of the patients. I suppose it was inevitable, but it always seemed to me that to take untried girls, put them to nurse septic wounds, and feed them on purely civilian rations was an exceedingly risky

experiment for the wellbeing of the future generation. I tried to make an intensive study of food values and to get equivalents in nuts and pulses to supply, at any rate, the building up part of the V.A.D.'s diet. I well remember in the last winter the epidemic of chilblains which followed the drastic cutting down of the fats.

In about August 1916, after the Battle of the Somme, there was, of course, a great pressure on the beds and we had a considerable influx of patients from overseas. There were several Canadians who settled down very happily and were deeply grieved when a sudden order came to evacuate all the Canadian patients from English hospitals. St. Loe wrote to Lady Drummond that some of our patients had been removed with actual tears in their eyes. A certain night-watchman from Ontario, who came to us with a terrible wound, which cleared up extremely well, was one of the patients who had to leave. At Christmas time I was much pleased when the Sister-in-Charge came in, in the early part of the week, and said, "Commandant, C. has come back." "What's he come for?" said I. "Oh, he says he's got Christmas leave and thought he would come home." St. Loe held, as indeed did the patients, that it was a great pity that the Canadians could not be left to make acquaintance with their English brothers-in-arms. At any rate, the patients themselves deeply regretted the change.

In common with other Red Cross women, I found the position of being in charge of a house full of the wounded extremely interesting. Though they were, like all Englishmen, reserved and talked little of their private affairs, and not at all of their wounds, a good deal more light was thrown on to the point of view of the British shop-keeper and artisan than I should ever have been likely to attain

in any other way. The younger men used to consult the nurses extensively as to their love affairs, and I remember a day when a certain smart Lance-Corporal came in great perturbation to consult my daughter as to how it would be possible for him to prevent the two young ladies, to both of whom he was engaged, coming to see him on the same day ! I forget exactly what manœuvre was executed, but I am sure it was extremely ingenious. What struck me strongly about the patients was their intense love of beautiful scenery. As everyone knows, the views round Newlands Corner are among the most striking in Surrey, and I remember a young Welshman saying to me how he loved lying on the grass at Newlands Corner, and how he used to look down into the valley and fancy how terrible would have been his feelings if he had seen the Germans in their field-grey advancing up the hill. He, of course, was an arm case. These could all walk about freely. The leg cases had a charming little invalid chair, with a small pony attached, in which they drove about a great deal further than they should. Finally these excursions were so appreciated that we got another pony and another chair, and the procession after lunch was extremely impressive. But it was possible occasionally to gauge their feelings as to the War. In the autumn of 1915 I developed a heart weakness which practically deprived me of the use of my legs, so that I had to be carried about the hospital. I was not able to visit the wards as much as I had done or as I wished ; but the orderlies were very good, and I had a chair in which I was carried about, and the patients were too polite to say that I looked like a Guy Fawkes ! I remember on special afternoons being carried into the largest ward, H, where there were five beds. The first time was on a cold day in the late summer

of 1916, and the men, except one, were fairly convalescent. Only about three of the five in Ward H were cot cases. The one exception was a man in the corner of the room, who was so ill that that night he was transferred to a ward alone, and, in fact, the danger-signal was flown of Sister saying to St. Loe, " I think I had better have a bottle of champagne upstairs for the night." The other men and convalescent cases from the other wards were sitting round a little wood fire exchanging experiences. I sat very quiet in my corner and listened. Some of them had been wounded near Arras, some at Armentières, some at Ypres, and they talked with considerable energy of the different degrees of frightfulness which they had experienced. Suddenly a voice from the most distant bed said, rather faintly, " But I was at Mons." There was a deep silence, and no further reminiscences were exchanged that afternoon.

The other occasion was in the same ward. It was in the summer of 1917, when the column in the Admission and Discharge Book " Where Wounded " ran with considerable monotony " Near Arras." Three of the men in the ward were convalescent and were out walking ; but two cot cases were lying quietly in their beds recounting their experiences after being wounded. One was a small shop-keeper from a Midland town, an elderly man who had lived a perfectly unadventurous life, and who had actually been saved from death by carrying a thick New Testament in his breast pocket. There was the Testament, half of it torn away by the bullet, and the rest covered with his blood. The other patient was a Cockney, and they were exchanging reminiscences as to the battle in which they had both been wounded, and in which the second one had very nearly lost his foot. " How did you

get on in the C.C.S. [Casualty Clearing Station] ? ” said the Cockney to the shop-keeper. “ Oh, I was all right ; but when they took me in it was quite dark and there was a great crowd, so I thought I’d better not stay. They bandaged me up, and I held my wound together and went on to the next C.C.S.” The Cockney inquired how he managed to pick his way in the dark, and the shop-keeper acknowledged that it had been hard work and that he got his wound a good deal jarred. Apparently the same state of affairs existed in the second C.C.S., and the shop-keeper thought it quite a matter of course that he should have gone on again. Anyone who had seen the awful condition of his wound, even a month afterwards, could not fail to be struck with the selfless heroism which caused a little, middle-aged man to stumble on in spite of his pain rather than occupy a bed in which someone more badly wounded than he should, he considered, have the preference.

There was also a good deal of comic relief. One Irishman arrived in the middle of the winter of 1916, looked round, sampled the dinner, and observed with a heavy sigh of relief to Sister, “ I’m here for the duration ! ” And, sure enough, the hospital had to be shut for its annual cleaning before he could be got rid of. On the other hand, another patient complained in despair that the premises were much too clean for him and that he wanted to be sent back to the hospital he had come from !

St. Loe, in *The Adventure of Living*, calls himself a boarder in his own house ; but no one who knew him would fail to appreciate the help that his presence and encouragement were to me. The V.A.D.’s all loved him. When he became ill, they nursed him, and after he took to sleeping in an open-air shelter the night nurses visited him in

company with the other patients. At the close of the War the Staff presented me with a delightful book containing, besides photographs and a list of the patients, the most humorous illustrations done by an artistic V.A.D. It is one of my most valued possessions. To St. Loe they presented a parchment inscribed with a poem to say how deeply they appreciated his kindness to them all through the hospital. This was inscribed "*To our Host. From the V.A.D.'s,*" and began :

*For four long years beneath your roof
We've put your goodness to the proof,
And now our stay with you is done
We'd like to thank you—every one.*

After describing how he was fagged for every sort of commission, it ended :

*And so through all the years of war,
Though Staff and patients crowd your door,
Usurping house, grounds, cars, and hall,
You've been the gracious friend of all.*

A friend of the younger generation, who appears to be much annoyed because his youth prevented him from figuring as a Conscientious Objector, says that this chapter gives a very false impression of our hospital life and that I have glossed over the pain and despair which must have made Newlands so sad a place. Nothing can be further from the truth. Our patients—remember, the great majority were surgical cases—bore the pain quite uncomplainingly. Of course they "grouched a bit"—is not grouching the inalienable right of the soldier? But as a whole their attitude was accurately described by the

chorus of a marching song, too hackneyed to quote, which was roared out, once at any rate, at every concert. The most lugubrious faces which I ever saw were those of the patients who were not cured and who had to be sent away when the hospital was shut by the military authorities on March 1st, 1919. Throughout the whole of the four years four months that it was open the general atmosphere of the Newlands Corner Hospital was not only contented, but actually gay. The pluck and the infinite patience of the British working class carried us through.

CHAPTER II

ST. LOE IN WAR TIME: AS CITIZEN

“In war time,” wrote St. Loe in the *Spectator* at the end of August 1914, “even Sheriffs may find work to do.” And certainly the record of his official activities between the outbreak of war in August and his going out of office in March proves that he took this work very seriously. A year afterwards he wrote to Sir John Simon, then Home Secretary, in connection with the Central Association of Volunteer Training Corps :

“When I was Sheriff, I amused myself by getting up the question of the *posse comitatus* and the Act of Henry VI. Since then the invasion which I contemplated as a legal exercise has in my opinion actually taken place. We are, therefore, all theoretically liable to be charged by the Crown, under the penalty of being called felons, to repel the invader.”

Though no enemy troops had been landed in Great Britain, the raid on London by Zeppelins on May 31st, 1915, certainly constituted a technical invasion. It was on the question of raising the New Armies that St. Loe did most of his work. Running through the columns of the *Spectator*, as through his private correspondence, there comes constantly the refrain, “Men, men, men,” “Recruit, recruit, recruit.” He foresaw only too clearly the

consequences of a long war, and from the very beginning his eager, active nature drove him into unrelenting endeavours to improve the man-power of the country. In a letter which he signed "Z" in the *Spectator*, which appeared on August 29th, 1914, he wrote that a Sheriff's duty "was to do everything he could to help in organising the national defence, and, above all things, to act as a recruiting agent for Lord Kitchener's Second Army." Lord Kitchener sent St. Loe a special request to act in this way both in his capacity as High Sheriff of Surrey and as Editor of the *Spectator*.

A logical consequence of St. Loe's concern about recruiting was his desire that those men who had offered to enlist, and whose offers had not been accepted owing to medical or physical reasons, should have some recognition given them. He wrote to the Surrey newspapers that as Sheriff he wished

"to have the privilege of presenting to 'the people who willingly offered themselves'—to use the noble words of Scripture—a bronze badge to be worn in the coat as a proof of service proffered to the State. In the first place, the badge will be an acknowledgment made on behalf of the county of the would-be recruit's patriotism. Next, the names of those who receive it will be placed upon a register which I intend to keep, so that, should there later be a renewed call to arms, their services may be the more easily utilised. . . . I ask, then, all Surrey recruits who have been rejected to write to me, giving full name and address, and enclosing, if possible, the official paper given to them at the recruiting office when they were rejected."

These letters, which were to be endorsed with the word

"Badge," were, of course, to come to our house, and Miss Dora Wells, who was acting as part-time secretary to St. Loe, voluntarily took on the dealing with the "Badge" letters as her war work. The badge itself was in the form of a bronze button and was designed by Harry Strachey and reproduced by Elkington of Regent Street, the inscription being, "When the people willingly offered themselves." By March 1915 some twelve hundred had already been given away. St. Loe heard privately as to the Government's attitude to the matter that Lloyd George attached the greatest importance to badges, but that Kitchener seemed indifferent, and said, "There are so many badges and so many buttons going about now that nobody can understand them." A ledger was kept of the applicants and the reason for their having been rejected recorded. The badge was given with the honourable understanding that in cases in which an insufficient chest measurement or height caused rejection, should the standard be lowered, the recipient would offer his services again. A suggestion made by Lord Rosebery and endorsed by Lord Derby for a general issue to rejected recruits was not supported, but that the badge was appreciated by those who, as St. Loe always put it, were wounded even before the War began, the following extract from a letter which was quoted in the *Spectator* of March 6th, 1915, is a sufficient proof:

"I received your letter and the badge safely last night, and can hardly tell you how grateful I feel to you for the kind and sympathetic words you so feelingly send me. I may say without any affectation that it is a great grief to me that I am unable to serve in the ranks at a time when England needs every fit man in this great struggle, just

because of a defect in my eyes. . . . I note what you say re applying again if conditions are altered, and assure you that I shall only be too eager to enlist at any time, if the authorities will take me. Thanking you again and again for your great kindness.”

In November, Colonel Watney having resigned the office of Chief Guide for active service, St. Loe became Chief of the Surrey Guides, a body for which he was always anxious to obtain official recognition by the military authorities, thinking that in the event of an invasion they would be of the utmost service. Before he went out of office as Sheriff he, therefore, used his official position to organise a picturesque parade of mounted Guides to act as escort to the Judge of Assize, taking him from the Judge's lodging to the Assize Service which was held at Holt Trinity Church, Guildford, and then on to the court. The late Mr. Justice Ridley, who was to have been Judge of Assize, entered most warmly into the idea and said that he would be proud of the escort of the Guides. Unfortunately, owing to illness, Mr. Justice Ridley did not come, but Mr. Justice Horridge, who took his place, was equally sympathetic. Accordingly, on Tuesday, February 23rd, a considerable body paraded in the Guides uniform outside the Lion Hotel, Guildford, at 10 a.m., rode down to the Judge's lodging, and formed a mounted escort to the coach. As far as I remember, the Judge excused St. Loe from attending him in the coach, and he remained in command till the Assize Court was eventually reached. Seats were reserved for the Guides in Court, and any Guide who was a member of the Grand Jury was specially allowed to attend in Guide's uniform.

But it was not chiefly in ceremonial exercises that the Guides were used during the War. Four solid pieces of work stand to their credit, three of them carried out at the request of the military authorities. In December 1914 a memorandum was drawn up and exercises were undertaken as to the best routes by which, in case of invasion, droves of cattle and livestock could be driven to a place of safety. The county was divided into five routes, and instructions were given to the Divisional Guides, who were, of course, in command of their Divisions, to keep as far as possible to the highest ground and not to use any metalled road. Directly his Sheriff's term of duty was over, St. Loe passed much of the time which he could spare from the *Spectator* riding about the county, particularly in parts unknown to him. Local Guides were always detailed to show him the way, and he thus experienced for himself the advantage of having a man who knew the various tracks and bridle-paths when getting from point to point. I, too, in the Newlands Corner Hospital, had had detailed orders as to the evacuation of the patients in case of invasion, and I always in my own mind depended on the Corps of Guides to lead the ambulances, motor-cars, etc., which would have to be mobilised, out of the county.

Various memoranda and private letters give particulars of the further war time activities of the Guides. Early in May 1916 a very interesting piece of work was entrusted to them. On Tuesday, May 9th, 1916, St. Loe was called up on the telephone at the *Spectator* office by the Southern Defences of London and asked to go and see the Engineer General, as the services of forty-four Surrey Guides were required for an important scheme. The memorandum continues :

“ Accordingly I went to see the General at 3 o’clock in the afternoon, and he expounded to me a very confidential and interesting scheme, under which the Guides would be used ‘ in the case of the emergency arising,’ i.e. in the case of invasion. If invasion takes place on the east coast, then it is the Northern Defences of London which will have to be manned and improved, and of course every spade and pickaxe and other form of entrenching tool and material will be wanted there. Accordingly, as soon as it is clear that the peril is from the north, all the material stored in lonely farmhouses and other places along the Southern trench line—often in places by country lanes and so forth—will have to be transferred in motor lorries to the north. Now some person of real ability, as far as I can make out Sir Francis Lloyd, for he has now taken over the whole of the London Defences, says that each lorry ought to have a responsible person with it, besides the A.S.C. driver, and accordingly I am to provide Guides who will meet the lorries, conduct them to the storehouses, requisition labour for loading them up, and then conduct them through London—a pretty tough job at such a moment—and so to the Northern Defence line. I hope to get this organised before long. Of course it is only a case of the ‘ emergency,’ but it is highly necessary to provide against it, even if unlikely. . . . My duty, of course, was at once to begin making arrangements for assembling my Divisional Guides, and giving them instructions with the map, etc.”

Confidential orders were issued to the Divisional Guides, who drew up lists of Guides detailed for this work throughout their district. St. Loe wrote to the Divisional Guide who sent in the first allotment of names :

“The telegrams which in the case of invasion Guides will receive will be the authority from the War Office. I will, however, in addition ask for authority to go near the Stores before the emergency call, but I am doubtful if they will grant it. But even if they do not, it will not matter, because the Guides can acquaint themselves with the neighbourhood before the day arrives. They have only got to walk along the nearest public road to the store-houses.”

By May 21st, 1916, the whole scheme was complete, and a letter was received from the Headquarters of the London District conveying Sir Francis Lloyd's “most sincere thanks to you and the Guides under your command for the willing and satisfactory manner in which they have undertaken to conduct motor buses or lorries to the various Tool Storehouses in Surrey in case of emergency, and the efficient manner in which the necessary arrangements have been made by you.”

In 1917 a detailed account of the Guildford caves with map was furnished by the desire of the War Office in June, and in July a similar report on the underground quarries at Godstone was asked for by the Headquarters of the London Defence, on the ground that there were several entrances between our advanced and second lines of defence. The sand caves of Reigate were also reported on by the district Guide, and at the request of the Southern Defences of London a very important special map was drawn up by the Guides of the Reigate and neighbouring Divisions showing the exact course of the water-mains, telegraph and telephone lines, and where electric light and gas sources could be tapped in case of invasion. The information given in the map was not obtainable

elsewhere, and the officers concerned expressed their gratitude for the work done by the Guides.

The official status of the Guides was that of a Corps forming part of the Technical Reserve, Territorial Force, and in December 1914, by the wish of the military authorities, in pursuance of their plans for the Defence of the Realm, all Surrey Guides had been sworn in as Special Constables.

Besides the specific pieces of work detailed above, and before the men and horses had been commandeered for other purposes, the Guides were inspected several times by the military authorities and undertook various night operations, the most striking of which was a dawn parade at Box Hill at the end of June 1915.

“ The parade was ordered for 3.30 a.m., and the Guides had to ride during the darkest part of the night from all parts of the county to the point of assembly. Over a hundred well-mounted Guides in their green uniforms were seen as the sun rose to have assembled, the majority of them having started for their cross-country ride at 11 o'clock on the previous night. None were allowed to start before that hour.”

It will be seen that the organisation and exercising of this active Corps added not a little to the other work undertaken by St. Loe during the War.

An interesting chronicle of the year 1916 is given by St. Loe in a series of confidential letters to Clough Williams-Ellis, whose marriage to our daughter Amabel had taken place at St. Martha's Chapel at the end of July 1915. No one who saw that wedding could ever forget it. It took place at 9 o'clock in the morning, and everyone except

the bride was in uniform. No vehicle can get up to St. Martha's, so we all walked up a sandy path which leads to the top of the hill on which the chapel stands. I shall never forget the sight of the bridegroom's mother with her four sons, all over six foot high and all in uniform, striding up the hill. St. Loe's Guides formed an escort, and all the members of the Newlands Corner Hospital Staff who could get there, including the two bridesmaids, were in their V.A.D. uniform. Unfortunately, the Press had heard of the ceremony, and so it was not as quiet as we could have wished ; but as soon as they were married, the bride and bridegroom ran down the hill to the waiting car and outdistanced the cameras.

By 1916 Clough Williams-Ellis, who had been transferred to the Welsh Guards on its formation, was in France, and St. Loe during that year wrote him a series of confidential letters, which give such a picture of his own activities that one ceases to wonder that the result was a breakdown in health. It was his firm belief that the Great War was indeed the war to end war, and even in 1914 we find him in the *Spectator* pleading for an international agreement for enforcing peace by treaties, each treaty being subject to being denounced by giving six months' notice. In the winter of 1915-16 he writes to Clough of a most interesting dinner, at which the guest of honour was Colonel House, and the other guests the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Stamfordham, Captain, now Admiral, Hall, and Colonel, now Sir Maurice, Hankey. St. Loe suspected that President Wilson had in his mind

“ the mad notion that when the war is over and the peace begins, you will be able to control munitions of war, and

get the nations to promise not to create new organs of destruction. That, of course, is a bright dream. You could only carry it out by means of a Universal Monarchy, or Universal International Police, controlled by some League of Powers, which would either create a hideous tyranny, like the Holy Alliance, or else they would fight amongst themselves. I absolutely distrust a system of universal peace resting on 'scraps of paper.' ”

Peace in the future and patience for the moment were undoubtedly St. Loe's watchwords at that time. He was deeply shocked by certain ideas as to reprisals which were current, and obviously this subject was discussed at the dinner, for he writes to Clough :

“ Among the many subjects we discussed at the dinner was how we were to meet the Germans' threatened reprisals for the *Baralong* business. My notion is that we should announce quite clearly that if they commit reprisals by shooting British Officers now in their hands as prisoners, we have no intention whatever of playing the same hideous trick and shall never punish the innocent merely to annoy the guilty. The way we ought to meet such a case is to declare that if Germany does shoot innocent persons, we shall never conclude the war until we have tried and brought to justice the man who gave the order for reprisals of this diabolical nature.”

It will be remembered that in the winter of 1915-16 Germany in a correspondence with the Foreign Office, conducted through the American Government, accused the British Navy of the murder of the crew of a German submarine in August by H.M.S. *Baralong*. Sir Edward

Grey had offered to submit the case to a tribunal of American Navy officers. This Germany flatly refused, but threatened reprisals.

At the same dinner the hard fate of Mr. Gerard, the U.S. Ambassador in Berlin, was discussed. The atmosphere in Berlin was furiously anti-English.

“ Nobody who speaks English or wears English clothes, or clothes cut in the English fashion, is free from suspicion or is not liable to insult. . . . It is a perpetual fight. Certainly the strain must be very great upon Gerard, and still more upon his family, for there appears now to be no society life in Berlin, at any rate for Americans, who are only less well hated than British. Owing to the war, half the diplomatic families are gone, and there is, of course, no German society left. It certainly sounds a bleak prospect.”

Although St. Loe got through such an enormous amount of hard work on his own account, he was on the Prisoners of War Help Committee and the Central Association of Volunteer Training Corps, besides giving any help he could to movements like the O.T.C. and the Scouts. In the late autumn of '14, a time in which the spy mania flourished like a weed, a certain fussy citizen mixed him up with Mr. Leo Maxse, who also had a house on the North Downs, and wrote to Scotland Yard as follows :

“ 28th October, 1914.

“ SIR,—Has your attention been called to Mr. Marxse, of Newlands Corner, near Guildford ? The article which appeared in the *Spectator* last week is one likely to have a strong influence in raising alarm at a German Invasion

and was presumably published under Mr. Marxse's authority.

"Mr. Marxse was also associated with the Surrey Guides and in a position which gave him the control of a vast body of evidence on High and By-ways in the County.

"His house near Guildford is in an important position and might also be worth attention.

"I know nothing at all personally of the gentleman but merely present these facts which I have gathered and which may be worth consideration."

The letter was brought to St. Loe by the local police, who asked for advice as to how to deal with it. Mr. Leo Maxse and St. Loe were obviously confused in the mind of the writer. At that moment the *Spectator* and "*The Nat*," as Mr. Maxse's *National Review* is always called, were at loggerheads, because the September "*Nat*" had published what the *Spectator* considered an attack on the diplomacy of Sir Edward Grey, and incidentally on the whole Government for its weakness towards Germany. The attack resulted in a boom for "*The Nat*" and the printing of a second edition. Certainly no one could have selected two more unpromising people to suspect as spies than St. Loe and Leo Maxse.

In 1915 St. Loe began his experiments with building in *pisé de terre*, that is, rammed earth, with which he in vain tried to ease the building situation after the War. A most successful dining-room, designed by Clough, was built as an addition to the Newlands Corner Hospital. The ground on which the room was to be built was found to be quite suitable for ramming, and in a very short time I had a delightful dining-room for the patients, in the building of which some of the most convalescent had taken

a hand. Another hut was built at Guildford for the benefit of the Guildford Volunteer Training Corps. St. Loe wrote to Clough about this in 1915 :

“ Mr. Swayne, an architect in the V.T.C., who has helped me, has made some interesting calculations. The walls, which are about 7 ft. high, took a platoon, i.e. 52 men, 10 hours to build. It is true that the 10 hours was done on two consecutive Sundays, but that, of course, does not matter. On a long summer day there would have been a saving, not a waste of time in doing it all on one day. The cost of 6*d.* per hour works out, Mr. Swayne tells me, at about £12 10*s.* He is going to make me an exact calculation of what it would be in brick and corrugated iron—of course at war prices—but he thinks about £30 or £40. I will send you later on a photograph of the building. It has, as the housemaid’s advertisement says, ‘ a nice appearance ’ ! ”

It seems a thousand pities that a system which avoided so much transport of material, was so cheap and so permanent, was not more generally adopted in the building crisis after the War.

A fat bundle of letters reminds me of the tea-parties which St. Loe held from 1914 to 1917, when he became too ill, to give the American Correspondents in London an opportunity of privately meeting members of the Government and other interesting people. A full account of this appeared in *The Adventure of Living*, but as they were the only parties of St. Loe’s at which I was not present as hostess, I may perhaps say a word as to the extreme homeliness and charm of these meetings. St. Loe contrived to make the members of the British Cabinet throw off

their anxieties for an hour and chat informally to the delightful people whom America had sent over as representatives of her Press. I was much too busy, and, after the first year, much too ill, to come up to London often, but I remember two occasions, one in the autumn of 1914, before the hospital opened, on which we all sat round the table in the Queen Anne's Gate dining-room, while a gallant Admiral told us thrilling sea yarns ; the second, in the spring of 1915, when Lord Crewe was the guest of honour. St. Loe always had the faculty of making his guests talk on their own subjects, and, though during these years the talk at his tea-parties necessarily was of the War, still its many facets were illustrated in the most intimate fashion by the various guests, both American and British. People who do not know that the way to keep a secret is to tell it to a journalist in confidence were astonished that not one word about these tea-parties, which were spread over three whole years, ever was made public. The bringing of the American Correspondents into intimate touch with the Prime Minister and other members of the Government was not the least of St. Loe's war services.

But nothing which St. Loe could do would satisfy him as being of sufficient importance. As he wrote to Clough in January 1916, at the end of a letter crammed with accounts of his activities :

" I am afraid this is a very dull letter, but at any rate it shows you how very unprofitably we busy civilians can spend our time. It is all talk, talk, talk. I get a positive horror of it sometimes, and think of swearing off talking for the duration of the war ! "

CHAPTER III

ST. LOE IN WAR TIME: AS EDITOR

THE history of the *Spectator* from 1914 to the Armistice is recorded in its files. There may be read, besides the week by week comment on the conduct of the War, the account of what use was made of the National Reserve—the campaign conducted on “Down Glasses,” with the paper’s refusal, announced on December 4th, 1915, to accept any advertisements of the sale of intoxicating liquor—the strictures on the shortages of rifles, together with many other papers of contemporary interest.

No one can, of course, find in the discursive pages of old newspapers a coherent account of past events. Only by selection from the mausoleum of the bound volumes is it possible to appreciate what were the matters on which any journal exerted an unmistakable influence on the minds of its readers at a national crisis. The files of St. Loe’s correspondence give ample proof that, with very few exceptions, the men responsible for the conduct of affairs during the War kept themselves thoroughly informed as to the line which the *Spectator* was taking. Some of them approved of the paper and some of them vehemently disagreed ; but they all read it.

As early as September 19th, 1914, the *Spectator* began that plea for the generous treatment of the enemy which was to be a feature of its columns throughout the War.

After the giving up of Louvain and other towns to military execution and the alleged shooting of civilians, St. Loe wrote a leader which at the same time advocated judicial investigation into the alleged atrocities and conveyed a warning against reprisals.

“ We shall not do any good to the people who have suffered so deeply in Belgium and France by making unfortunate and innocent Germans and Austrians suffer equal miseries. Such action would not be justice, but crime and folly.”

The shortage of rifles in January 1915 was much worse than the allusions in the *Spectator* allowed. It had not been unforeseen, for from 1907 onwards St. Loe had advocated the need of a reserve of a million rifles. In January 1915, when the shortage was at its worst, Lord Curzon, acting temporarily for Lord Lansdowne as leader of the Unionist Party in the House of Lords, emphasised the need for the Government to set themselves a standard of military requirements. Incidentally, it may be said that the session at which this speech was made was unique in the annals of modern Parliaments, for, in order to hear a statement by the Secretary of State for War—Lord Kitchener—the Peers sat while the Commons were still in recess. In a private letter to Lord Curzon, St. Loe gave the whole history of the *Spectator's* pre-War efforts to persuade the Government to create a reserve of rifles, so that in the event of hostilities it might be possible to equip the troops which would undoubtedly have to be improvised. After in vain trying to rouse his colleagues of the Press to the need of this reserve, he in 1909 read a paper on the subject to the National Defence Association.

It was in the month of January 1915 that the *Spectator* first broke a lance in defence of Lord Haldane. Readers of his admirable autobiography will remember the restrained and dignified account the author there gave of the attacks, led by certain sections of the Unionist Press, which the nation thought fit to make on the man who had given them both the Expeditionary and Territorial Forces. In acknowledging the *Spectator's* words Lord Haldane wrote to St. Loe on February 6th :

“ I also agree with you about the rifles. But it is true that no one except yourself took the point, not even the General Staff.

“ I had such misgivings on the subject that I had a new rifle designed and had arranged to re-arm the Regulars with it before I left in 1912. It was a beautiful rifle, and 1,000 were made for experimental practice. There was unfortunately difficulty over the cartridge cases. This was surmounted just a month after I gave up office. But then the General Staff had come to want to have an automatic rifle and would not carry out the re-armament with the new rifle until they had made it automatic. This they did not succeed in doing. I was, therefore, not much to blame, but I think with you that we ought to have had clearly before our eyes the utility of a vast surplus of equipment.”

In the summer of the following year (June 1916) Lord French, speaking at Cambridge, paid a tribute to Lord Haldane's services with regard to “ that great Territorial Army which is administered by those invaluable Territorial County Associations, the conception of which was surely one of the greatest strokes of genius any statesman ever exhibited.” The *Spectator* said :

“ Will any one dare after these words to pursue Lord Haldane with the unjust attacks to which he has been exposed ? The malignancy, as well as the folly and ignorance, of the accusations brought against Lord Haldane are a public disgrace.” (July 1st, 1916.)

Lord Haldane shortly after this lent St. Loe for forty-eight hours a private dossier of his own proceedings with Germany on behalf of the Government since 1906. Commenting on this, St. Loe wrote to him on July 10th :

“ Of course, as you know, I did not agree with your pre-war diagnosis of the situation (with regard to Germany). I diagnosed the situation quite differently. But that is not the matter we are concerned with. Given your diagnosis (and diagnosis is like faith, a thing that comes to one and cannot be altered at will) you took the action which an honest and patriotic man ought to have taken. You believed that there was a powerful peace party in Germany, or rather, that the party which called itself a peace party would remain in being, would grow in strength, and might ultimately control the situation if we refrained from upsetting the pacific apple-cart. You turned out to be wrong, but that does not touch your patriotism in the very least ; nor can it undo all the splendid work you did in preparing the army for war.”

Dealing with the subject of preparation and compulsion, the letter continues :

“ I still think that you (when I say ‘ you,’ of course the responsibility is shared with the Cabinet and the Army

Council) did not make all the preparation you ought to have made. When I saw in 1909 or thereabouts that it was quite obvious that you (the Government) were not going to give us compulsion . . . I came to the conclusion that there were two things that might be done, outside compulsion, and outside the Regulars and Territorials, which would very much increase our strength and yet not cost much money. The first of these was the looking up and registration of all the trained men in the country, so that when we began to improvise troops (as I knew we should when the war came) we should at any rate have a great number of trained men in the sense of knowing how to shoot and form fours. Accordingly I set my mind to work at the National Reserve, and as you know it was rather a tough fight for one man, and I was often told by my friends—and, indeed, in depressed moments thought myself—that I was a fool for my pains. My efforts to get the thing on the move cost me from first to last some £3,000 and at one time it looked as if it were all going to be useless. For though you were always very kind and appreciative, there was a middle period when things stuck.

“ The next idea I had in my head for preparation was what I called the reserve of a million rifles. . . . We cannot improvise rifles—the *sine quâ non* of the soldier—half so quickly as we improvise men. Therefore the only sensible plan is to have the first great instalment of rifles for our improvised troops in hand. Therefore let us keep ready in store a million rifles over and above the number required for every visible type of soldier and reservist in the country, a million rifles, that is, to be used directly improvisation begins. When I expounded this view I added that though the rifle was the essential thing, I meant it largely as a

symbol, and that there should be a suit of khaki, a great coat, and a set of bandoliers to go with each rifle. But I did not insist upon this, because these things can be made quickly. I put my money on the rifle. At the National Defence League meeting in 1909 Lord Nicholson told me that I was an ass for my pains, that we should never improvise troops, and that therefore 'Mr. Strachey's rifles for his armed mobs would never be used.' I said that I was no more in love with armed mobs than he was, but that I knew we should have to improvise troops. Upon which he struck the table with his fist and said, 'Never, never !' 'How about the South African war ?' I interjected. 'We improvised troops then.' And his final reply was 'We may have done it then, but shall never do it again.' But I must not reminisce in this way. I merely remind you of all this to explain my view, which is that in my opinion the Cabinet was gravely mistaken in not taking up seriously the forms of preparation which they could have made without compulsion and without any vast expense of a kind which Parliament would have refused."

In reviewing that autumn (November 1916) a volume by Mr. Harold Begbie entitled *The Vindication of Great Britain*, the *Spectator* said the book should rather have been called "A Vindication of Lord Haldane." The review continued :

"There never was a more idiotic fable than that Lord Haldane was in his secret sympathies a pro-German. . . . The great political mistake which Lord Haldane made was that he backed the peace party in Germany when in reality that party had very little power. No doubt the peace

party had a real existence, but Lord Haldane was completely misled in counting on its development. Germany had two horses in her stable, War and Peace, and after several practice gallops she decided to run War, and leave Peace out of it altogether." (*Spectator*, November 4th, 1916.)

Lord Haldane wrote to St. Loe a few days after :

"The Expeditionary Force was designed expressly to meet the chance of a break down of the efforts to keep the peace with Germany, and the French were consulted about its use in emergencies from 1906 onwards while it was being perfected.

"I am with you in your views about a College of Administration. It is a subject which has never been understood by our old Universities. But the London School of Economics, with which I have been connected for many years, and have used copiously for training Army Administrators, is a fine instrument of the kind. Ask about it. People know little of it."

The review of Mr. Begbie's book in the *Spectator* excited great controversy. St. Loe published one letter on the other side, but declined to open the columns of the *Spectator* to controversial correspondence about Lord Haldane's actions. He wrote to Miss Haldane on November 9th, 1916 :

"Now I want very much to shut down. I do hope all your brother's friends will now stick to the advice which I ventured to give and which he fully admits is the right line. Let us leave the negative or defensive line entirely

alone and restrict ourselves to the positive side of his case—I mean let us point out all the good things he did and let the violent and unjust accusations die out of themselves as they certainly will. We keep them alive even by denying them.”

On July 5th, 1915, Lord Cromer, in a letter to St. Loe, suggested writing a series of articles entitled “*Germania contra Mundum*,” with the object of explaining to the people of this nation “what they are fighting for and what the triumph of Germany would involve.” St. Loe caught at the idea, and on July 14th the first of the series appeared, and was translated and reproduced in the chief Dutch papers. It was a masterly exposition of the reasons for which the British Empire entered the War, and should be read by all those people of the younger generation who honestly believe that the War was a capitalist war, lightly acquiesced in by responsible statesmen who should have seen more clearly. The cumulative effect of the reasons set forth in its paragraphs is in its stark simplicity of diction irresistibly convincing. The indictment is piled up in paragraph after paragraph. “We are fighting for the maintenance of the British Empire and for our own existence as a nation.” “We are fighting for the maintenance of that ‘freedom of the seas’ to which the Germans say that they aspire.” “We are fighting in order that the smaller nationalities of the world may enjoy that ‘place in the sun’ of which Germany virtually claims a monopoly.” “We are fighting in order that the frontiers of the map of Europe should, so far as is possible, be ethnic.” “We are fighting that the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine should be returned to their rightful owners.” “We are fighting in order that the Slav race should not be

crushed out of existence by the Teuton." The article concludes with these words :

" The list of objects which we seek to attain is long. It embraces almost every subject of importance which for generations past has engaged the attention, not only of British statesmen, but of the civilised world."

How many of the objects so eloquently set forth by Lord Cromer were attained by the victory of the Allies may be judged by the study of the political events which followed the signature of the Peace of Versailles ; but his five articles give proof that the inspiration which armed the nation in 1914 and '15 was for no unworthy or selfish end. The papers were reprinted by Macmillan in pamphlet form at the beginning of September.

Of a different nature, but with the same ethical background, was the series of sketches which appeared in the autumn and winter of 1915-16 by Mr. Donald Hankey, writing under the pseudonym of "A Student in Arms." Not till Mr. Hankey was killed in action on the Somme in 1916 was the secret of the authorship of these eighteen sketches revealed. On October 21st, 1916, St. Loe wrote of him in a memorial article :

" In the papers written by him . . . he proved an inspired interpreter of the private soldier."

That, indeed, was true. The papers appeared with considerable regularity during the difficult winter of 1915-16, and my work with the patients in the hospital showed me how true they were in their picture of the soldier, and also helped me to understand the point of view of the men with

whom I was dealing. The portraits contained in the paper, *A Student, His Comrades, and His Church*, might all have been taken straight from men in the wards. Well did I know "Fred," who had been an N.C.O. in the Student's old platoon, "with his short, stodgy figure, his red cheeks and waxed moustaches, his black eyes and truculent voice"—"Tommy, the Londoner with the big nose and the lively temperament"—"Dave, a pit lad from Lancashire"—and "Jim from Brum." They were all at Newlands Corner, and without the interpretation given in these papers it would have been far more difficult for a woman brought up in London, without any contact with men of these types, to understand and sympathise with their point of view. The book was printed and reprinted and had an enormous success.

In the spring of 1916 Mr. J. C. Squire produced a little volume of verse entitled *The Survival of the Fittest* (published by George Allen & Unwin, 1s.), the first poem of which was a biting attack upon St. Loe on the text that the *Star* of March 30th had quoted him as saying that without the war the race would degenerate. St. Loe reviewed the book with great gusto and said (*Spectator*, June 24th, 1916) :

"Not uningenious is his method of attack. He pictures two friends of his who have perished in the war, and contrasts them with what he considers the fiery Editor in easy circumstances, who is sheltering himself behind grey hairs and a rampart of pens, paper and ink—defending with unheard-of gallantry a twentieth-line trench, three hundred miles behind the line. We are all inclined to feel a certain touch of contempt, as Mr. Dooley once said, for 'the man behind the gun, five hundred miles behind and

wishing it was further !' Mr. Squire turns this to good account :

*' These were my friends ; Strachey, you did not know them,
For they were simple, unaspiring men ;
No ordinary wind of chance could blow them
Within the range of your austerer ken.'*

"These friends who died were so simple as to think war a terrible evil, yet ' with mingled loathing and elation,' they fought because they looked upon the war as a crusade. Then come some really fine lines, where the satire leaps up into the flame of true poetry. They saw

*' England, an immemorial crusader,
A great dream-statue, seated and serene,
Who had seen much blood, and sons who had betrayed her,
But still shone out with hands and garments clean ;*

*Summoning now with an imperious message
To one last fight that Europe should be free,
Whom, though it meant a swift and bitter passage,
They had to serve, for she served Liberty.*

.

*Strachey, these died. What need is there to mention
Anything more ? What argument could give
A more conclusive proof of your contention ?
Strachey, these died, and men like you still live.'*

" We shall not quarrel with Mr. Squire in the very least for pummelling the head of the elderly Editor who pours forth ink, while others pour forth blood in the service of their country. As long as he can fire the hearts of our young men with such verses as those we have quoted, we are quite content to be the peg or the whipping-boy—or shall we say the hook at the end of the lion's tail with

which the mediæval zoologists thought that the lion lashed himself into a fighting mood ? ”

Incidentally author and reviewer made friends over the poem, and Mr. J. C. Squire took a more generous view of the attitude of the “ elderly Editor,” whose melancholy privilege it was, having regard to Anno Domini and poor health, to serve his country at home instead of, as he was longing to do, on the fields of France or in Flanders.

The *Spectator's* campaign of “ Down Glasses ” was so intimately connected with the question of food shortage that the records of the paper on these subjects are best considered together. St. Loe had a long correspondence with Mr. Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1915 on the question of buying out the liquor trade. In the spring of that year Mr. Lloyd George arrived at provisional arrangements with the leading brewers as to the basis of State purchase. Unfortunately, the matter was turned down by the Cabinet. After becoming Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George wrote to St. Loe as follows (December 29th, 1916) as to the history of his efforts whilst Chancellor of the Exchequer :

“ This arrangement, whilst treating the Trade liberally, at the same time would have been a profitable transaction for the State. You know how that scheme fell through. The leaders of the Opposition, who were appealed to, decided to acquiesce in it if the Government proposed it. Unfortunately, the late Prime Minister was violently opposed to it, and I found it impossible, in the teeth of his opposition, to press it upon the Cabinet. It was clearly not a matter upon which you could risk a split in the Government.”

Early in April 1915 the King, as the *Spectator* said, "with characteristic modesty and freedom from sensationalism" announced in a published letter from Lord Stamfordham to the Chancellor of the Exchequer :

"I am to add that if it be deemed advisable, the King will be prepared to set the example by giving up all alcoholic liquor himself and issuing orders against its consumption in the Royal household, so that no difference shall be made, so far as His Majesty is concerned, between the treatment of rich and poor in this question." (*Spectator*, April 3rd, 1915.)

According to the *Annual Register*, two days later, "The King commanded that no wines, spirits or beer should be consumed in any of his houses after the 6th [April]."

At that moment the reason for the "Down Glasses" campaign was more the effect of drink on the workers than, as it became subsequently, the consumption of materials for foodstuffs in the manufacture of intoxicants.

In July 1915, St. Loe in the *Spectator*, foreseeing that a reserve of foodstuffs would become quite as necessary as a reserve of rifles, published a leader entitled "The Grand Victualler to the Nation," in which the immediate establishment of a Food Controller was advocated. It was not, however, till more than a year later, i.e. December 10th, 1916, that Mr. Lloyd George, on taking office as Prime Minister, carried out the plans made by the previous Government, as detailed by Mr. Runciman on November 15th, and established the office. At the same time he created a new Ministry of Food.

About a month later, Lord Balfour, under the pseudonym of "A Scot," asked several pertinent questions as

to the total prohibition of all alcoholic drinks during the war.

“ Do you propose,” said “ A Scot,” “ to give the Government power by legislation to enter every private house and seal up the cellars ? If so, at what intervals do you propose to have the sealed chambers inspected ? If you do not propose the step I have indicated, do you not think the policy you advocate would be unfair to those who have no private cellars ; in other words, that it would be class legislation in a most obnoxious form ? ”

St. Loe, in a private letter to Lord Balfour on December 29th, said :

“ I hope you will not think my reply heated. It was not meant to be so, though it came out rather fiercer than I intended.”

In one of those notes appended to the letter, signed “ Ed. *Spectator*,” which Sir Redvers Buller had long before stigmatised as “ vulgar tags,” St. Loe said that, although it would be impossible, owing to the shortage of officials, to hold an inquisition into the contents of private cellars, he suggested making it an offence for persons to consume intoxicants in their own custody, except under medical orders. He pointed out that the drastic restriction of the hours of sales of intoxicants was just as unfair to the people who had no cellars as total prohibition. The interest, however, of the note was that it contained the first suggestion made by the *Spectator* as to “ the issue of a Royal Proclamation calling upon all loyal subjects of the King to support the law (against intoxicants) and to set an honourable example.” For nearly a year the *Spectator*, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, had excluded all

advertisements of the Trade from its columns, having published on December 4th, 1915, the following note :

“ During the War the *Spectator* will not admit into its columns any Advertisements of Intoxicants.”

In the following March, *Punch* and the *Spectator* together made great play with an idea contributed, says St. Loe in a private letter to Sir Owen Seaman, by “ an enraged correspondent ” as to what would happen if, under the National Service Scheme, just then instituted by Mr. Neville Chamberlain, the Editor of the *Spectator* were allotted work of national importance at “ Messrs. Bung and Blank’s Brewery.”

“ Mr. Strachey’s fertile and forcible pen was (so the rumour went) to be employed by this firm in the drawing up of some pungent advertisements under the headings, ‘ The Weakness of the Water Movement,’ ‘ Up Glasses ! ’ etc., including a verse series, in Horatian alcoholics, entitled ‘ Bonnie D.T.’ ”

“ It was reported that in the ironic circumstances in which he found himself, Mr. Strachey felt it his duty to acquiesce loyally in the change of view imposed upon him, and to adopt a policy of ‘ Down *Spectators* ! ’ ”

“ Our representative is happy to state that he has the highest authority for giving an unqualified denial to these sinister allegations.” (*Punch*, March 14th, 1917.)

By the spring of 1917 there was indeed need for Mr. Punch to perform his share of National Service by raising the spirits of the nation. The food situation was getting desperate. It was far more serious than the public were

ever allowed to know, and the *Spectator* became an advocate of total prohibition for the period of the War. In April, St. Loe was a member of a deputation of various associations supporting different shades of temperance which went to Mr. Lloyd George, and in a private letter he describes what happened.

“Lloyd George told us that we could not have War Prohibition because the Trades Union leaders had vetoed it, and he produced a representative Trades Union leader, himself I believe a teetotaller, who told us in perfectly frank and plain language that the members of the Trades Union organisation would have nowt to do with War Prohibition, would not in fact have it at any price ; a dead veto. Thereupon Lloyd George said to us in effect : ‘ Now you see what I am up against. It is useless after that to ask me for War Prohibition.’ ”

Held up by the Trades Unions in the matter of prohibition, the Government early in April appointed Mr. Kennedy Jones, who had been associated with Lord Northcliffe in the direction of some of his publications, as Director of Food Economy, and, being a journalist, his thoughts naturally turned to the publicity of an appeal to the nation. On April 14th, St. Loe suggested in the *Spectator* that publicity might be had by making use of “the ancient and laudable custom of Royal Proclamation,” and quoted the George III Proclamation which had been printed in *The Times* on the previous Monday. The Government took up the idea of advising the King to issue a Proclamation, and, dining with St. Loe at Brooks’ at the end of April, Mr. Kennedy Jones asked him to draft a Proclamation which would subsequently

be sent by the Department for the approval of the Privy Council. The actual authorship of the original draft was not, of course, publicly revealed. The alterations made by the Privy Council were very slight and chiefly verbal, and the Proclamation when it appeared ran as follows :

“A PROCLAMATION

“ WE, being persuaded that the abstention from all unnecessary consumption of grain will furnish the surest and most effectual means of defeating the devices of Our enemies and thereby bringing the war to a speedy and successful termination ;

“ And out of Our resolve to leave nothing undone which can contribute to these ends or to the welfare of Our people in these times of grave stress and anxiety ;

“ Have thought fit by and with the advice of Our Privy Council to issue this Our Royal Proclamation, most earnestly exhorting and charging all those of Our loving subjects, the men and women of Our realm who have the means to procure articles of food other than wheat and corn, as they tender their immediate interests and feel for the want of others, especially to practise the greatest economy and frugality in the use of every species of grain ;

“ And We do for this purpose more particularly exhort and charge all heads of households to reduce the consumption of bread in their respective families by at least one-fourth of the quantity consumed in ordinary times ;

“ To abstain from the use of flour in pastry, and moreover carefully to restrict, or wherever possible to abandon, the use thereof in all other articles than bread ;

“ And We do also in like manner exhort and charge all persons who keep horses to abandon the practice of feeding

the same on oats or other grain, unless they shall have received from Our Food Controller a licence to feed horses on oats or other grain, to be given only in cases where it is necessary to do so with a view to maintain the breed of horses in the national interest ;

“ And We do hereby further charge and enjoin all ministers of religion in their respective churches and chapels within Our United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland to read or cause to be read this Our Proclamation on the Lord’s Day for four successive weeks after the issue thereof.

“ Given at Our Court of Buckingham Palace this second day of May in the year of Our Lord 1917, and in the seventh year of Our Reign.

“ GOD SAVE THE KING.”

Oddly enough, there was a considerable controversy as to the pastry clause, certain food experts holding that pastry could be made in such a way that there was an actual saving of flour, as it was used as a substitute for bread. It certainly was not so used in the Newlands Corner Hospital, and after the Proclamation the consumption of flour by the Staff went down considerably.

Another shortage which was a cause of anxiety was that of paper. This entailed considerable financial loss to the *Spectator*, as the advertisers were strictly rationed to six and a half pages. Fortunately, the situation was not as bad as was at first announced, and the Government, which had threatened a 50 per cent. reduction, finally ordered only 25 per cent.

It was about this time that St. Loe began to feel the strain on his health which was imposed by the enormous amount of work which he got through, and by the autumn

of '17 symptoms of pernicious anæmia appeared. The food shortage was brought sharply home to me. Early in 1918 compulsory rationing came into force and meat tickets were issued, and about that date St. Loe's doctors said that a certain quantity of meat, nearly double the quantity rationed, was essential to his health. I rang up the Guildford Food Controller and asked whether on a medical certificate an extra ration could not be allowed ; but she answered with great regret that pernicious anæmia was not on her list of diseases for which extra meat could be obtained. " But," said I, " the doctors tell me that it is essential and that he will die if he does not have it." " I am very sorry," she replied, and the tone of her voice gave no doubt of her sympathy, " but it is not on my list and I must go by my orders." Some weeks afterwards she rang up most joyfully to say that pernicious anæmia had now been put upon her list and that she was able to give St. Loe a ticket authorising him to have issued to him a double ration of meat.

CHAPTER IV

ACROSS ST. GEORGE'S CHANNEL

Domestic politics from 1914 to '19 were so much less vividly interesting than matters concerned with the conduct of the War that no mention has yet been made either of the formation of the Coalition Government in May 1915 or of the intricate series of events which ended in Mr. Lloyd George becoming Prime Minister in 1916. The *Spectator*, of course, took its part and made its comments on these changes, and its attitude may briefly be summarised as a supreme effort to show the confidence of the nation in whatever Government was in power at the moment.

There is one matter, however, in which St. Loe both as citizen and as Editor took so large a part that it is impossible to pass over it in silence. In the life and death struggle of a country it is important that men's minds should be free to fight the enemy and that they should not have cause to fear that separated from them by a narrow channel of water is a section of their fellow-countrymen who are not at one with them in desiring, above all things, the victory of the nation concerned. There could be no confidence in England and Scotland that such was the case. It will be remembered that on the outbreak of war the Buckingham Palace Conference on Irish affairs was in full session, and that a struggle over the exclusion of Ulster from the Home Rule Bill was only too likely to lead

to civil war. On the outbreak of hostilities the Home Rule Bill was suspended, not dropped, and the story of Ireland during the Great War resolved itself into two parts—the part played by what is now the Free State, and the struggle of Ulster, now Northern Ireland, to avoid being put under a Dublin Parliament, while she was taxing her resources to the utmost to be of service to Great Britain in the War.

At the outbreak of hostilities Mr. John Redmond, with true Celtic eloquence, declared that all quarrels between Great Britain and Ireland were at an end and that Ireland ranged herself on the side of England. But no soothing declaration from an eminent statesman could save the Government from the evil effects of their past action in having permitted the formation both of the Ulster and of the Nationalist Volunteers. It was, according to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the Committee of the Irish Volunteers which planned the Rebellion of Easter 1916, in the course of which Sir Roger Casement, accompanying the German vessel, the *Aud*, laden with warlike stores, landed from a submarine, only to be captured by the police and subsequently to suffer the extreme penalty of traitors in war time. The Irish Republic was proclaimed on Easter Monday, against the wishes of the Volunteer Committee, who foresaw that, as the *Aud* had been scuttled by her crew to avoid being the prey of a British gunboat, the promised “interesting manœuvres” which were to take place in Dublin would not be crowned with success. The *Spectator* quite deliberately minimised the effect of the Dublin revolt. The leader of April 29th, 1916, begins :

“ There are plenty of criticisms both true and obvious

which can be made in regard to the Dublin revolt, but we mean to make none of them. And for this very good reason. To make them would at this moment contribute nothing towards our object of beating the Germans, and we have no use for either words or actions just now which fail to contribute to that object. We have got to win the war, and to win it we must concentrate our whole attention upon the military and naval situation in its capital aspects."

Later in the year, when the Courts Martial had dealt with the leaders of the rebels, the *Spectator* wrote in sterner terms of the revolt.

"When it came, we were inaugurating the final stages of our struggle with Germany, and it was all-important that the national energy should not be deflected by any outside considerations. It was essential to the conduct of the war that every part of the United Kingdom should co-operate against the foe. The Irish extremists, in concert with the tyrants of Germany, chose that moment to stab us in the back."

With regard to these Courts Martial, a curious piece of information came privately to St. Loe at the end of that summer. One of the officers who sat on these tribunals (I purposely refrain from giving names in this connection) told St. Loe that the rebels at the tribunal on which he sat were defended by Mr. Tim Healy. St. Loe's friend (I quote from a letter written on Friday, September 1st, 1916) "was quite delighted with Healy and said that he used to have luncheon with the Court and that he had

told them that he had never appeared before a fairer tribunal and was quite satisfied with its justice."

In an effort to obtain peace in Ireland, the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, had announced at the end of May, that is, shortly after the Dublin revolt,

"that Mr. Lloyd George, at the unanimous request of his colleagues, is to act as mediator between the various Irish parties. Clearly the first need is silence. Negotiations so delicate must fail if conducted under volleys of recrimination. We will only say of the task before Mr. Lloyd George—'Heaven grant he may accomplish it!'" (*Spectator*, May 27th, 1916.)

Mr. Asquith further appealed for silence during Mr. Lloyd George's negotiations, which were on the basis of bringing the Home Rule Act

"into operation as soon as possible after Parliamentary sanction has been given to the exclusion of the six counties and the three Parliamentary boroughs of Belfast, Londonderry, and Newry. . . . In answer to Sir Edward Carson, Mr. Asquith said that the six counties will be 'definitely' struck out of the Act. They cannot be re-included without a Bill." (*Spectator*, July 15th, 1916.)

On Monday, July 24th, the proposed Irish settlement broke down in the House of Commons, Mr. Redmond saying that he had entirely misunderstood the point as to Ulster.

"We never contemplated the idea that the great question of the exclusion of Ulster was to be foreclosed and settled now."

Mr. Lloyd George replied that he

“agreed that the exclusion was to be ‘provisional,’ for it was to be reviewed at the end of the war by an Imperial Council. Nevertheless, it was common ground that there was to be no ‘automatic inclusion’ of Ulster. The six counties could be included only with their own consent.” (*Spectator*, July 29th, 1916.)

At the end of July Mr. Duke became Chief Secretary for Ireland, and in April 1917, after a heated debate in March on renewed Home Rule proposals, Mr. Lloyd George, who in December had become Prime Minister, called a Convention to meet in Ireland to discuss proposals for a new Irish Constitution. Sections of every party in Ireland were asked to send representatives, but the Sinn Feiners refused to take part, on the ground that they were offered a representation unequal to their importance in the country and that their principle, that of complete Irish independence, would not have been even considered by the other parties. The Ulster Unionists also limited the powers of their delegates by insisting that they should have no power to agree to any proposal which had not been communicated to and endorsed by the Ulster Unionist Council. On June 15th all the Irish prisoners, who were still interned in England as the result of the Dublin rising, were released to provide an atmosphere of goodwill for the Convention, and in July it finally met, a hopeful augury being the appointment of Sir Horace Plunkett as Chairman. A detailed scheme for the Constitution of the Irish Parliament was sent in confidence to St. Loe. It had been prepared by a prominent official of the Nationalist Irish Party, and as it made no mention whatever of

exclusion, but treated Ireland as a whole, it was not encouraging to the friends of Ulster. Owing to this and other private information, St. Loe, by the middle of October 1917, had begun to take a very serious view of the situation. The following memorandum was written by him in October 1917 :

“ I am very anxious about what is going on in Ireland just now. As far as I can make out, De Valera has for the last fortnight been ‘ playing at taking possession of the County Clare and a good part of Limerick.’ This game involves ‘ playing ’ at taking military possession of both sides of the Mouth of the Shannon, and indeed, of that whole, that wonderful waterway that extends deep into the heart of Ireland. I may be too imaginative, but it seems to me possible that if the Germans could detail 20 or 30 big U boats for the purpose, they might get into the mouth of the Shannon and so well into the rebel region. I don’t know what our naval resources are on the coast there, nor what are our military posts at the Mouth ; but if De Valera by a *coup de main* seized whatever military stations we have in the Counties of Clare and Limerick and held them for forty-eight hours, which I should think he could now do, the U boats could get in, leave a cordon of mines behind them, and then distribute their cargoes of arms to De Valera’s people. I note that De Valera has been specially active at Kilrush. I take it that U boats, especially if any of the big, commercial U boats that crossed the Atlantic are still available, could carry a considerable amount of cargo. At any rate, a flotilla of them could probably get in several thousand stand of arms and also ammunition, which would be quite enough for a German ‘ Distraction.’ No German expects an Irish rising to

succeed ultimately. A three weeks' rumpus would be quite enough for them."

From the middle of August onwards a great deal of information from a reliable source as to the Sinn Feiners was laid before St. Loe as to what was going on in other parts of Ireland while the Convention was meeting at Dublin. The channels of the communications of the Sinn Feiners into Germany were laid bare, and it was stated that the Germans had for a considerable time been landing machine-guns and ammunition for the Sinn Feiners at remote points on the West Coast. They also had a fund of £135,000 at their disposal. By the middle of October matters became extremely urgent. It was reported to St. Loe, who, of course, passed on all information to the Government, that the affairs of the Sinn Feiners were being managed by a secret committee of three and that no one seemed to have the slightest idea who they were. As the days went on, it was obvious that extensive preparations were being made all over the country for another rising. A report received early in November was very disturbing reading. Details were given of a plot by the Germans to place selected men in every industry engaged in Government work, and at a given moment an attempt was to be made to set ablaze as many places as possible. In Belfast many Sinn Feiners obtained employment in the ship-building yards. The Ulster Commissioners of Police were informed of the situation, and the conclusion was come to that nothing should be made public owing to the fear of an immediate panic and a religious civil war breaking out in Ireland.

The letters containing all this information were addressed to the hospital, and there came a day when St.

Loe, who was expecting a further communication, was obliged to go to London. "Open all my letters," said he to me, "and if such and such information is contained in one of them telephone to me to the hotel where I shall be sleeping." The expected letter was duly delivered and I opened it. I shall never forget that morning. There must have been some sort of crisis in the hospital, for the lobby of my office seethed with applicants for admission. From the lobby anyone speaking on my private telephone extension could clearly be heard. An inspection for that day was threatened ; the N.C.O. in charge made his usual visit ; Sister wished to come and see me early, and, naturally, the last thing I wanted to announce was that I had a secret telephone call to make. At last the coast was clear. I rang up the hotel, and St. Loe's voice was heard at the end of the wire. Even then my troubles were not over. The hotel possessed a private exchange. However, as best I could, I paraphrased the information contained in the letter, and it was handed on at once to the proper authorities.

More than a year later information was conveyed to St. Loe that his name was included on the black list of the Sinn Feiners. This, of course, meant that sooner or later their emissaries would probably try to get him. The information troubled him not a whit ; but I am bound to say that I took a stand against his sleeping any longer out of doors. This he had been ordered to do in the hope that the fresh air would help the disease from which he was suffering. Whilst there were twenty beds occupied by convalescent patients in huts in the garden and night nurses going about with lanterns, I hoped he was pretty safe ; but directly the hospital was closed, I implored him to come indoors. No doubt there were a thousand easier

ways in which his removal could have been accomplished, but the idea of his lying asleep at midnight while the emissaries of Sinn Fein crept up to him from behind his hut, was too melodramatic to be pleasant.

In April 1918 Mr. Lloyd George's Convention made a barren report, and from that time onwards there was much shilly-shallying on the part of the Government on the question of applying the Military Service Act to Ireland. The Parliamentary debates at the end of June were a little surprising. Lord Curzon stated in the House of Lords that events had happened which had not been anticipated by the Government :

“ The first was the discovery, in the course of the month of May, that there was a sinister and formidable conspiracy of the leaders of the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland with the enemy of this country, and that the leaders of that association in Ireland were involved in a plot which was to mature at the very moment when, and designedly, the Germans in co-operation were to make an effort to annihilate our forces across the sea. *Several noble Lords have spoken as if the information on which we acted had been in our possession all the time. Nothing of the sort. The revelations to which I have referred were absolutely new.*” (*Spectator*, June 29th, 1918.)

The article continues :

“ If the revelation of the Sinn Fein plot with the enemy came as a surprise to Lord Curzon and his colleagues, all we can say is that they were almost the only thinking men in the kingdom to whom it was a surprise.”

The General Election of December 1918, which took

place just after the Armistice, returned the Coalition Government to power ; but it was not for another year that Mr. Lloyd George introduced a new Irish Home Rule Bill, definitely providing for the establishment of two Irish Parliaments, a Northern and a Southern, but leaving ample ground for controversy on the question of area.

CHAPTER V

THE "SPECTATOR" AND AMERICA DURING THE WAR

"Les opinions ne sont que des points de vue."—ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE.

It is sixteen years since the outbreak of the War, and even now it is difficult to gauge the attitude of the United States of America at the beginning of hostilities as interpreted by the "Notes" of its President. We may credit Mr. Wilson and his Government with the wish to maintain the most correct and impartial neutral attitude, and indeed the conflicting elements which make up the American nation would not have tolerated anything else. But the man who is fighting for his life is apt to think that the onlooker, who constantly hampers his action by insisting on the strict observance of the laws of the *duello*, is acting in the interests of his opponents. Especially is this so when he considers that his opponent is not held up so frequently or at such crucial moments as himself.

America, as a nation, probably desired nothing so much as to keep out of the whole situation. Yet the receipt in the last few days of December 1914 of what was intended and recognised as a "friendly" Note of Protest on the British violation of the rights of neutrals with regard to shipping, could not but be galling. It must be remembered that the American Government had made no protest to Germany as to her interference with the rights of neutrals in the invasion of Belgium.

The official line of the Foreign Office with regard to America was that it was desirable to comment as little as possible on American policy and affairs and, if comments were made, that President Wilson should in no case be attacked. A confidential memorandum to the Press pointed out the very delicate nature of the situation and stated that the Foreign Secretary felt the grave importance of retaining the sympathy which existed for the cause of the Allies among some sections of Americans. Especially was a warning conveyed as to saying nothing which would give the impression that Great Britain desired a rupture between the United States and Germany.

Before the issue of this memorandum St. Loe in consecutive weeks had published in the *Spectator* two articles both entitled "A Great Danger" (January 23rd and 30th, 1915). In these he alluded to the parallel between the behaviour of Great Britain in 1860 during the war of the North and South and the attitude of the United States towards the Great War. Later on (June 1916) Lord Cromer was to contribute two most interesting papers to the *Spectator*, giving an account of how in the year 1864, when twenty-three years of age and a subaltern in the Royal Artillery, he had gone on leave to the United States, determined if possible to get to the Front.

"At that time," he wrote, "the relations between England and the United States were very strained. Although the sympathies of the mass of the people were on the side of the North, those of London society, which found expression in Parliament at that time to a much greater extent than would be the case at present, and which were strongly represented in the London Press, were very decidedly in favour of the Southerners. . . .

"Young and inexperienced in politics as I then was, I had not been long in New York before I came to the conclusion that all the knowledge I had derived from the London Press of the actual state of affairs in America had to be swept aside. It is, I think, impossible to speak in terms of too high admiration of the sturdy determination and patriotism then shown by the Northerners, and more especially by all the commercial community of New York."

The end of the paper and the second paper the next week give a thrilling account of Lord Cromer's visits to the Federal trenches. It is interesting to note that the *Spectator* was among the very small number of English journals which from the beginning of hostilities loudly advocated the cause of the North. The Federal critics of the sixties attributed the motive of Great Britain's attitude to the danger to the cotton trade, just as Great Britain in the Great War attributed America's remonstrances as to interference with neutral shipping to their fear of damage to their European commerce. This background in St. Loe's mind is plainly visible in his review, published in the *Spectator*, February 6th, 1915, of Mr. Roosevelt's book, *America and the World War*. Mr. Roosevelt's reply and explanation were contained in a very long letter written on February 22nd, of which the following passages may be quoted :

"You say that most Englishmen are a little sore at what they consider my coolness towards England in the book and my desire to be just to Germany. I expect this. At the same time remember that I emphatically stated that England was right : and that England had made all peace-lovers her debtors by her action toward Belgium ; but I

thought it very unwise to indulge in hysterics in the matter. I am trying to look at things as dispassionately as possible. I have more close and warm personal friends in England than anywhere else outside of America ; but next to England I have these close and warm personal friends in Germany. Next to my own country I put England first ; I am in closest sympathy with her. I regard the average German-American in this country as fundamentally a good citizen. He is extraordinarily bitter against me at the moment."

Commenting on the parallel with the war of the North and South, Mr. Roosevelt continues :

" One word about what you say as to the temper of your people now exactly corresponding with the temper of our people in the North during the Civil War, and your saying that you will brook no interference with your right to resist a ruthless, remorseless enemy. I do not wish you to brook any interference ; but I do earnestly hope in your own interest that you will so far as possible act as John Bright, through Sumner, counselled Abraham Lincoln to act in the Civil War. You will find his letters in young Trevelyan's *Life of John Bright*. Palmerston and Gladstone were acting towards the United States at that time as badly as Wilson and Bryan are now acting towards England ; indeed, they were acting much worse. The friends of the United States in England earnestly besought the Union party in America not to permit themselves to get embroiled with England ; and this not primarily in England's interests but in the interests of the United States. In just the same way and for just the same reason, I earnestly hope you will not permit yourselves to get embroiled with the United States. Remember, my dear

Strachey, that England has acted pretty roughly as regards the rights of neutrals during the past few months. She has not behaved as badly as Germany ; and I hold it infamous of our people to protest when they did not protest about Belgium. But after all our neutral trade is ninety per cent. of it, probably ninety-five per cent. of it, to the advantage of the Allies and to the disadvantage of Germany. Germany knows this ; and there is nothing she so wants as to have a break between us and England. For heaven's sake, help those of us on this side who are doing everything we can to avoid a break. I shall keep on hammering just as strongly as I know how. I am seeking in every way to influence my countrymen by dwelling on the one hopelessly wrong attitude of Germany, that towards Belgium ; I am fighting Wilson's Ship Purchase Bill tooth and nail."

The *Spectator* had taken a strong line as to President Wilson's Bill, and published an article on January 9th, 1915, entitled "The American Government as a Ship-owner." It will be remembered that the Bill was never passed, and on May 20th, in a letter to St. Loe, Senator Lodge, at that time a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, spoke of the defeat of the Ship Purchase Bill as a matter of great importance, and commented on the fact that the Foreign Relations Committee also defeated the attempt to prevent the export of munitions of war. Upon this President Wilson's Administration had taken what Senator Lodge called "a correct stand."

Mr. Roosevelt added a very long postscript to his letter of February 22nd :

"Moreover, my dear Strachey, while I most deeply

sympathise with your feelings and realise the great tension you are under, yet I cannot accept your view that you have been careful to respect the rights of neutrals, or even wise from your own standpoint as regards your attitude toward neutral vessels.

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“Surely you must know that the German-Americans in the United States have been exceedingly anxious to have us put a stop to all shipments to the belligerent countries. This is because, as I have said, at least ninety per cent. of the benefit of these shipments goes to the Allies. Now the English position has been that you will take advantage of your strength on the sea to secure for yourselves the ninety per cent. to which you are entitled and to prevent your enemies getting the ten per cent. to which under the Hague Conventions and in accordance with international law they are entitled.

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“Remember also, my dear Strachey, what I think I have already said, that the average Englishman down at the bottom of his heart feels that the American is an alien. I think the Englishman is right. I think that it is better that we should get along on the basis that we are two closely-knit and friendly nations rather than by making believe that we are the same people divided into two camps.

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“By the way, in that number of the *Spectator*, I greatly enjoyed what you said about Haldane. . . .

“Another thing that I liked was the brief memorandum in which you exposed the prophecies of the English

pacifists of only a year ago. Evidently you have almost as big fools as we have in the pacifist line—in which case they have reached the nadir of timidity, weakness and folly."

Finally, in his own handwriting, Mr. Roosevelt added :

"More and more I come to the view that in a really tremendous world struggle, with a great moral issue involved, neutrality does not serve righteousness ; for to be neutral between right and wrong is to serve wrong. The neutrality our Government now boasts, like yours in '61 and '70, serves ease and selfishness at the moment ; but it does not serve morality, nor in the long run real national interest.

"My dear fellow, you and those like you are playing heroic parts ; I admire and respect you ; I bitterly regret that my own people are not at this time rising to the same level."

I cannot, of course, tell whether it is remembered in America, but it is certainly forgotten in England, that on October 18th, 1914, Mr. Roosevelt contributed an article to the *New York Times*, in which he sketched in considerable detail an outline of the suggestion for a scheme resembling the League of Nations. The *Spectator* of October 24th quoted an extract from this article as published in the (London) *Times* of October 19th. In the full text, however, of the *New York Times* the extract should run as follows :

"The great civilised nations of the world which do possess force, actual or immediately potential, should combine by solemn agreement in a great World League for the Peace of Righteousness. A court should be created

—a changed and amplified Hague Court would meet the requirements—composed of representatives from each nation ; these representatives being sworn to act in each case as judges pure and simple, and not in a representative capacity. The nations should agree on certain rights that should not be questioned, such as their territorial integrity, their rights to deal with their own domestic affairs, and with such matters as whom they should or should not admit to residence and citizenship within their own borders. All should guarantee each of their number in the possession of these rights. All should agree that other matters at issue between any of them, or between any of them and any one of a number of specified outside civilised nations, should be submitted to the court as above constituted. They should furthermore agree not only to abide, each of them, by the decision of the court, but all of them to unite with their military forces to enforce the decree of the court as against any recalcitrant member. Under these circumstances, it would be possible to agree on a limitation of armaments that would be real and effective.”

The *Spectator* leader proceeds to show how “Mr. Roosevelt’s Dream of Peace ” would have worked in the circumstances immediately preceding the war. St. Loe himself, however, adhered to the opinion which he had advocated ever since the Second Hague Conference—that war would cease if any Power which declared war without warning were boycotted by the rest of the civilised world (see *Spectator*, June 29th, 1907). He himself always said in conversation that there should be an obligatory six months’ warning of the outbreak of war by two nations whose attempts at arbitration had failed. Indeed, in a

leader on December 19th, 1914, he again advocated this course in the *Spectator*.

St. Loe's correspondence with Mr. Roosevelt, together with constant articles on America in the *Spectator*, went on all through the critical years of 1915 and '16. An episode which, if the tragic events of these years had been a drama played at a theatre, would have supplied a little "comic relief" was the sailing of Mr. Ford's Ship of Peace in December, 1915. This involved a correspondence between St. Loe and Mr. McClure of the *New York Evening Mail*, lasting from December 1915 to September 1916. In December 1915, the *Spectator* published an article under the title of "The Talk of Peace," in which it compared with the mediæval sailing of the Ship of Fools the ship in which Mr. Ford and his friends, including Mr. McClure, set sail on December 4th in order to bring the nations of Europe to their senses. Mr. Ford prepared two ships "crammed with all the male and female cranks of America, intent to voyage to neutral countries, and there make fatuous speeches and hold platitudinous congresses." The *Spectator* suggested that, owing to the danger of submarines,

"the ships should have the letters 'S.O.F.' painted in gigantic letters on the bows, the stern, and the sides. The initials would serve to indicate the 'Ship of Ford,' as well as the older and more picturesque phrase which we have ventured to apply from the literature of mediæval Germany."

Unfortunately, as far as can now be gathered, there was not a single belligerent country in which the passengers of this ship were permitted to land, though finally Mr.

McClure got to England, where he was at first detained as a dangerous alien, but subsequently released. A curious little episode resulted from a luncheon at "Simpson's Restaurant," at which St. Loe entertained Mr. McClure on August 30th, 1916. The memorandum of this lunch, dated September 4th, 1916, states :

"Mr. McClure talked excitedly at lunch about his experiences in Germany, Austria and Turkey. I naturally encouraged him to speak frankly, as what he had to say interested me, and as no revelations made by him could be injurious to us, though they well might be to the enemy, I merely interjected remarks to disabuse him of certain wild ideas in regard to the possibility of Britain joining with America and Germany at some future date to counter-balance a ridiculous hypothetical alliance between Russia and Japan. I then took Mr. McClure back to the *Spectator* Office, in order that I might finish the conversation under more confidential conditions. While we were talking, and about a quarter of an hour after we had returned from luncheon, one of the *Spectator* clerks announced that there was a gentleman named Hicks wanting to speak to me on the telephone. Mr. Hicks, or the person purporting to be Mr. Hicks, told me that he had been lunching at Simpson's, and that there were two gentlemen in the compartment where he was lunching who were talking on matters connected with the war, that one of them appeared to be an American, and that the other was evidently connected with the *Spectator*, and that he wished to warn me as Editor that the conversation dealt with subjects that ought not to have been discussed in a public place, and that he—as belonging to a public office—might think it his duty to report the same to the

authorities. Upon this I told him that it was I, the editor of the *Spectator*, who had been lunching at Simpson's, and that if he considered the conversation of a dangerous character, he was quite right to report it, and I congratulated him on his vigilance and public spirit, and said I hoped that he would do so. He then rather changed his note, and said that he did not desire to prefer a complaint, and that in any case 'the gentleman belonging to the *Spectator*'—i.e. me—had said nothing indiscreet, and that it was only the things said by the American gentleman that were objectionable. He had said things that ought not to have been said in public, and he thought that one of the people in the compartment had been listening suspiciously. . . . I then told him that the American gentleman was Mr. McClure, at which he somewhat impatiently said that he would much rather not know his name, or hear anything about him, and that he did not want the incident to go any further. I asked him to tell me the things said by Mr. McClure which he considered specially indiscreet and so damaging, because I thought I ought to know them, as it might be necessary for me to warn Mr. McClure; though I did not particularly want to do so, because he might take back to America some ridiculous story that it was now impossible to have luncheon in London without being spied upon. I completely failed to get out of my unknown telephonist what the particular indiscretions he complained of were. He was beginning to grow a little agitated, and at this point the conversation was cut off, either by him or by the Exchange, and I heard no more."

The memorandum concludes with various explanations as to the identity of Mr. Hicks, who, after such a lapse of time, may be allowed to maintain his anonymity.

It was not till the spring of 1918 that St. Loe opened relations with President Wilson. Very few people will have forgotten the gloom of the military situation, which public gloom was enhanced for us by the doctors saying that St. Loe's disease was practically incurable and that he would shortly succumb to it. However, the idea of imminently approaching death was quite inadequate to dim his energy and spirit, and he entered into relations with the President's entourage, which resulted in the President sending him a signed photograph. The intermediary was Mr. Josiah Quincy, one of President Wilson's principal supporters in Massachusetts. Mr. Quincy's link with St. Loe was that his wife was the daughter of a very old American friend, Mr. Samuel R. Honey. Mr. Honey encouraged St. Loe to write to President Wilson direct to thank him for the photograph, and in a letter dated March 12th, 1918, after conveying his thanks, St. Loe went on :

" May I, however, venture to ask whether I am not right in thinking that in your War Messages and Speeches you are moving, when you touch the subject of a League of Nations, on rather different lines from those generally current ? As I read your words, they point to an International system based upon Treaty obligations (i.e. on contract) rather than on some scheme of Imperial or super-Imperial Federation, such as Alexander of Russia dreamed of when he set up the Holy Alliance. If nations could be made to respect their Treaties as men of business their bonds, a great deal would have been gained."

St. Loe's letter goes on to point out the difficulties of enforcing arbitration and suggests :

"Suppose, however, that instead of arriving at a Universal Court of Arbitration, the essential point that the League of Nations agreed on was that Treaty Contracts between nations as long as they existed must be respected. If a nation felt a Treaty Contract was oppressive it might give a year's notice of determination. Till that year had expired, the resort to arms would be punished by a Universal Boycott—a Non-Intercourse Act passed by every State in the League. Few nations would like to risk this.

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"If I am right in thinking that your speeches show that your mind is moving cautiously in this direction of basing the new dispensation upon contract, I shall feel greatly encouraged in trying in the *Spectator* to get this view kept before the public mind."

On April 5th the President replied in a personal letter which revealed how modest his own hopes for the League really were. He had, he confessed, never been of the opinion that an elaborate and active organisation could be established. He evidently feared that a "constitution" for the League would raise all the points of jealousy and possibly thwart the achievement of the real objects of the League. He was thinking chiefly along the lines of a mutual guarantee of political independence and territorial integrity, which he saw had to be based on a just peace.

He did write a sentence registering his agreement with St. Loe's special plea for the sanctity of treaties. But he was obviously concerned with a plan of only a simple and elementary form. The League as he saw it was not to be an alliance, or a balance of power, but a voluntary

association which any nation prepared to co-operate and to qualify for its guarantees could join. He granted the validity of St. Loe's fear that in the future nations would not care to fight for obscure issues or boundary disputes. But he also thought there might be an opposite effect ; the fear that even trivial troubles might ignite another world conflagration. For that reason he foresaw that the nations would focus on the prevention of the troubles which might lead to war, and this would dominate the League until enough experience had been gained to make changes in its objective advisable.

To anticipate, St. Loe's interpretation of President Wilson's ideals was proved to be right by a speech which the President made to the Sorbonne on December 21st, 1918, as to which the *Spectator* of December 28th wrote as follows :

" He " [the President] " then added these significant words : ' Just a little exposure will settle most questions. If the Central Powers had dared to discuss the purposes of this war for a single fortnight, it never would have happened, and if, as should be, they were forced to discuss it for a year, the war would have been inconceivable.' These phrases about the value of exposing a man's motives and procuring the period of delay sent our memory back to an interpretation which in March of this year we ventured to place upon some of Mr. Wilson's language about the League of Nations."

It was on Tuesday, January 8th, 1918, that President Wilson had delivered his celebrated Message to Congress containing his Fourteen Points. On the 12th the *Spectator* commented on this and on Mr. Lloyd George's statement

of War Aims (which were summarised in a leader as Restoration, Reparation and Redemption), observing in the first note in "News of the Week" that :

"No honest man could read the words of Mr. Lloyd George and President Wilson without recognising that here are profoundly sincere words, words of which the one and only intention is to create conditions on which the peace of the world can be revived and preserved."

According to the *Annual Register*, 1918, Count Hertling, the then German Chancellor, summarised and commented on President Wilson's Fourteen Points as follows :

"I. No secret international agreements. This point was approved by the Chancellor. II. The freedom of the seas. On this point also the Chancellor said that Germany was in agreement with the United States. III. The question of an economic war. The idea of an economic war, after the war, was also condemned by Count Hertling. IV. Limitation of armaments. The Chancellor said that the German Government were prepared to discuss this matter, which would indeed be of the first importance after the conclusion of hostilities, if only on account of the financial condition of all the European Powers. V. The colonial questions. On this point the speaker's remarks were quite non-committal. VI. The evacuation of Russian territory. In regard to this matter the Chancellor declined to admit that the Western Powers had any kind of right to interfere. VII. The question of Belgium. On this point, probably the most important of all, Count Hertling said, 'As far as the Belgian question is concerned, it has been declared repeatedly by my predecessors in office that at no time during the war has the forcible

annexation of Belgium by the German Empire formed a point in the programme of German policy.' But he said the Belgian question would nevertheless have to form part of the general discussion of peace terms, and, in particular, it could not be discussed apart from the principle of the integrity of the territory of the Central Powers. VIII. The evacuation of France. The speaker said that there had never been any intention to annex these parts of France. But he declared again that the Germans would never allow themselves to be robbed of Alsace-Lorraine, and he reminded the house that 87 per cent. of the people of those provinces spoke German as their mother tongue. IX., X., XI. The nationalities of Austria-Hungary and the Balkan questions. Since these questions primarily concerned the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the German Chancellor left the reply to these points to his Austro-Hungarian colleague. XII. The Turkish Empire. Germany, said the Chancellor, would loyally support the just rights of its Turkish ally. XIII. Poland. Since it was the Central Powers which had liberated Poland from Russia, it must be the Central Powers and Poland herself, which would decide the future of that country. XIV. The League of Nations. The Chancellor expressed general sympathy with this idea."

"He then," continues the *Annual Register*, "ended his speech by stating once more that the German Government were ready for a peace of reconciliation, but that this peace must be founded upon a recognition of the integrity of the German Empire."

It should be noted that, with regard to Russia, the Chancellor repudiated all idea of Western interference.

In September 1918 President Wilson again, in a speech in New York, dealt in a general manner with the question of Peace Terms. Writing the same week on the *Nation's* unfavourable comment on the speech, the *Spectator* of September 28th commented :

" We have often had occasion to point out that President Wilson's idealistic and Lincoln-like determination to see the war fought to a decision was being grossly misrepresented in this country by people who desired to claim him as their leader in opinions which he has never possessed. ' You ask me,' said Lincoln, ' how long this war must still go on. It will go on until our task shall have been accomplished, until our just cause shall have triumphed.' So, in effect, says President Wilson."

And in the following week, dealing with the points of the September 27th speech, which had been delivered before the opening of the fourth Liberty Loan, the *Spectator* quoted the President as saying :

" This is a people's war, not a statesmen's. Statesmen must follow the clarified common thought or be broken. . . . It would be folly to leave the guarantee for the security of peace to the subsequent voluntary action of the Governments we have seen destroy Russia and deceive Rumania."

In October 1918 it will be remembered that Prince Max of Baden became German Chancellor and, through the Swiss Government, immediately addressed a Peace Note to President Wilson, asking for negotiations on the basis of the Message to Congress of January 8th. A series of questions and answers were exchanged between the President and the German Government. These lasted

for nearly a month, and finally a German delegation was sent to the Western Front to ask Marshal Foch for the terms of an armistice. With regard to the Fourteen Points, President Wilson explained categorically, as is stated in the leader published in the *Spectator* of November 9th, 1918 :

“ The Allies, recognising that the term ‘ freedom of the seas ’ is capable of various interpretations, are unable to accept as it stands one of President Wilson’s famous fourteen principles, and reserve to themselves freedom to insist upon their own point of view in the Peace settlement.”

A second reservation was made by the Allies on the question of exacting reparation from Germany for damage done in invaded territory, the President expressly stating that :

“ Compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air.”

The German delegation, headed by Herr Erzberger and General von Gundell, met Marshal Foch and Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss on Friday, November 8th, the day before the abdication of the German Emperor. It was said at the time that Foch, standing by a table in the railway-carriage which was then his headquarters, received the two Germans with the simple question, “ *Que désirez-vous, messieurs ?* ” Finally, as we are silently reminded every year, the Armistice came into force at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of the year 1918.

CHAPTER VI

GAINS AND LOSSES

On August 24th, 1918, a leader appeared in the *Spectator* suggesting that when a peace communication came from the Germans, as by that time it was obvious that come it must, there should be no Peace Conference in which an attempt might be made to play off one Power against another and raise the anger of the Allies.

“As a matter of fact,” continued the article, “it will be perfectly possible for the Allies by negotiations with each other to lay down just Terms of Peace, terms which, as the *Spectator* has insisted ever since August 1914, shall not involve the sowing of the dragon’s teeth, shall not carry with them the seed of future wars, which shall not be dictated by the desire for aggression, or even by over-anxiety in regard to the security of frontiers, but shall look to a settlement of the world in which Justice and Security shall go hand-in-hand.”

When the Armistice, with its necessary sequel of a Peace Conference, against which St. Loe had issued this warning, came into force, the world was so deafened and bewildered by the tumult of the last four years that, in the sheer relief which followed the silencing of the guns, neither nations nor individuals were able to gauge whether in very truth the dragon’s teeth were being sown once more.

Nations, however, consist of individuals, and, the strain once relaxed, individual groups and families began to count their gains and losses. To us privately had come an incomparable gain. Not only had Amabel's husband returned scatheless from the war, but in the June of 1918 a little daughter had been born—one certain asset in that time of suspense and disaster. In the dawn of a beautiful June morning I opened my eyes to see at the foot of my bed the Sister whom we had replaced in the hospital in order that she might look after Amabel. A telephone message had come through from the little house under the hill where she was being tenderly looked after by her mother-in-law, and we were told that we must go at once. A hospital with septic wounds is, of course, no place in which a baby should make its appearance in the world. At that time we could not use petrol for private matters, so St. Loe's pony was harnessed to the governess cart and he drove Sister Todd and me over the Downs in the stillness of the summer morning. I remember that a lark soared up from the piece of Downs which had been ploughed up to grow food, his song a message of peace and hope. All went well, and, by the kindness of friends both at the Front and here, little Susan's appearance in the world was made known to her father only three hours after it had occurred. A week after St. Loe wrote *A Peace Message to a Grandchild*, which was published in the *Spectator* at the end of the month.

*Ah, Dearest, you were bold and wise,
Brave father's braver daughter,
You dared to face a world grown old
In fire and storm and slaughter.*

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*The old world withers. Those dear eyes,
Grown conscious and serene,
Shall gaze on a transfigured sphere,
An ampler, nobler scene,*

*Where men, with clearer aims and hopes,
And stronger thoughts than ours,
Will build new mansions of the mind,
Scale Heaven with their towers.*

*You give the anguished-stricken earth
Your message of the True ;
You are the herald of God's Peace,
We are reborn in you.*

Only fifteen months later the same scene was almost exactly re-enacted. The same Sister roused me, this time before the dawn of an August morning, and little Charlotte appeared to face the complexities of the modern world with the same frank and fearless gaze as that of her elder sister. Charlotte and Christopher, who followed two years later, were both born in the old house at Newlands—a house, needless to say, made clean and wholesome for the reception of such gentle guests.

To go back to the last phases of the War, St. Loe mourned the loss of two great friends. In the autumn of 1916 Lord Cromer had accepted the Chairmanship of the Dardanelles Commission. The files of St. Loe's correspondence contain letters with regard to this which show that this tax upon Lord Cromer's energy did not prevent his taking a deep interest in the various burning questions of the day. Yet in October he wrote that the inquiry took up all his time and was most troublesome. In December he was taken ill with influenza and resumed his work too early, dying at the end of January 1917. A note in the *Spectator* of February 3rd says of him :

“ Lord Cromer died as he would have liked to die—in the discharge of his duty. He knew when he undertook the Chairmanship of the Gallipoli Inquiry that it would probably mean his end ; but he felt, and rightly felt, that this was no more a ground for refusing to preside than the prospect of death would be a reason why an officer or a soldier should not ‘ go over the top ’ at the word of command. We have endeavoured to describe elsewhere what was Lord Cromer’s chief contribution to the work of Empire building and ruling. Here we can only say that the present writer has found the task of placing his view of Lord Cromer before the public a very arduous one. In these matters it is as a rule best that judgment should be passed by one whose personal affections are not engaged. The ties of a long and intimate friendship make it impossible for the writer to satisfy himself. But work that does not satisfy is bound to be a source of pain.”

St. Loe later took part with Lord Cromer’s other friends, notably Lord Grenfell, in the arrangement of a memorial to Lord Cromer to be erected in Westminster Abbey. This was unveiled in May 1920, after a most moving short service in Henry VII’s Chapel, at which Lord Curzon gave an admirable address.

The other loss was that of Mr. Roosevelt, who died suddenly on Monday, January 6th, 1919. St. Loe wrote in the *Spectator* :

“ The memory of his fine career will be an inspiration to his countrymen, and it will be cherished by British people who, through Theodore Roosevelt, were drawn closer to their fellow-kinsmen and fellow-democrats on the other side of the Atlantic.”

It may be remembered that the first full session of the Peace Conference was held in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles on Saturday, January 18th, 1919, the forty-eighth anniversary of the proclamation of the German Empire in the same place. Once again St. Loe, as in June 1907, December 1914 and March 1918, stated his views on the best foundation of peace.

“The best foundation of all is the enforcement of the sanctity of contracts. Let it be ordained that no nation can denounce a Treaty without a year’s notice. That and nothing more. Let the means for enforcement be the crushing of any nation which refuses to give a year’s notice by means of the boycott. . . . Probably no Power would hesitate to join such a simple League as this, though many would hesitate to join any other kind of League. . . . The creation of a League with such functions would not be a makeshift or a colourless compromise.” (*Spectator*, January 18th, 1919.)

The draft Covenant of the League, as laid before the Peace Conference by President Wilson in the middle of February, was, however, not simple, and fully justified the delightful story of M. Clemenceau, told at the beginning of the month by Sir Frederick Maurice to the *Daily News* and quoted by the *Spectator*.

“M. Clemenceau declared that every morning at his bedside he says to himself : ‘*Georges Clemenceau, tu crois en la Ligue des Nations.*’ And every morning ‘I raise my hands and recite my new creed.’ ”

The Covenant did contain a clause enforcing the giving of notice of a resort to arms, the period being cut down to three months, instead of the year advocated by St. Loe.

The *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1926 edition) defines the issue before the Peace Conference to have been a treaty based on President Wilson's Fourteen Points of January 8th, 1918, minus his point about "freedom of the seas," and plus a definition of loss and damage. The Covenant of the League of Nations formed Part I. of the Treaty, the revised draft of which (the first draft had been repudiated by the Germans) was presented by the Allies to the German delegates at Versailles on June 16th, 1919. The *Spectator* early in July stated that the Treaty offered "the only chance that remains to save civilisation from destruction," and in the same article, which from internal evidence was obviously by St. Loe, added characteristically, "We have got to take the Peace as we find it and to make the best of it." It was said at the same time that when the ex-Empress Eugénie read the terms of the Treaty she said that in almost every clause she detected a nest of serpent's eggs whence hissing vipers would presently be hatched. Writing more than ten years afterwards, the world knows that this tragic prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

But if the full draft of the Treaty of Versailles, as presented to the Allied Nations for ratification, was so dangerous a document, what can be said of the Treaty which was finally ratified without the signature of America? The first indication of the coming trouble was perceived as early in the history of the Conference as March 8th, 1919, when the *Spectator* published a note giving a *résumé* of the attitude of Senator Lodge to the proposed League, Senator Lodge being the Chairman-designate of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate in the new Congress which was shortly to assemble. In August came the "Lodge Reservations," which the *Spectator* summarised as follows :

“First, he wanted the Monroe Doctrine to be definitely guaranteed and the United States to be saved from any kind of entanglement. Secondly, he wanted America to reserve the right to withdraw from the League without assigning any reason. And thirdly, he wanted to reserve the Congress its constitutional right to declare war on its own exclusive authority.” (*Spectator*, August 16th, 1918.)

The *Spectator*, however, still hoped that the Senate “would not delay the very desirable ratification of the Peace.” As everyone knows, when the Allies ratified in the late autumn, the Senate of the United States postponed ratification, and the Anglo-American Securities Treaty of late June 1919, by which French territory was guaranteed against future attack, fell to the ground. The *Spectator* had described this Treaty as, “in fact, a defensive Alliance of a very precise kind. France may trust us to observe it in the letter and in the spirit,” and in retrospect it is quite obvious, as stated by the able article by Colonel House in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1926 edition) :

“If the French had been assured of protection, their attitude toward Germany, toward reparations and toward disarmament undoubtedly would have been more in keeping with the public opinion of the world.”

I remember well a conversation with Colonel House at Hinchbrook in August 1922, in which this thesis was fully developed by him and the probably dire effects of the French feeling of insecurity exposed. Truly the little serpents in the nests of the Articles of the Treaty of Versailles were already beginning to hatch out.

CHAPTER VII

ETHICS AND IDEALS

Coming to within the last decade of the forty years with which this book deals, I feel that it is appropriate to take stock of the ethics and ideals which actuated St. Loe throughout that long period when, in his view, the *Spectator* was acting as one of the watchdogs of the nation. On at least three occasions its Editor's high standard of honour in public affairs cost the paper much popularity and made him personally obnoxious to the Ministers criticised. As long ago as the year 1900 he and Mr. Chamberlain, with whom he was at the moment on terms of considerable intimacy, had had a controversy, not confined to the pages of the *Spectator*, on the subject of the War Office contracts which had been carried out by the firm of Kynoch, of which the Colonial Secretary's brother was Chairman. The *Spectator* had commented on Mr. Lloyd George's attack on Mr. Chamberlain as follows :

“ It seems to us that it is not expecting too much of Mr. Arthur Chamberlain to say that while his brother is in the Cabinet he should refrain from taking an active part in any company which has large commercial dealings with the Government.” (*Spectator*, August 11th, 1900.)

Mr. Arthur Chamberlain was deeply offended by the note, and an interview with him was published in the

Birmingham Daily Post, on which an article in the *Spectator* of August 18th was founded. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain took the same view as his brother and privately accused St. Loe of encouraging the attacks of "the baser sort of radicals on the honour of public men." St. Loe, however, was quite uncompromising. After pointing out in a private letter to Mr. Chamberlain that the *Spectator's* views had been misrepresented in some points, he wrote plainly that

"one had a right to expect that the brother of a man with high Cabinet rank should not take, while he was in power, an active part in obtaining Government contracts. I admit that this is asking a certain sacrifice of a minister's relations, but not an unreasonable one, as far as I can see."

Years afterwards (1919) St. Loe added a postscript to a private memorandum as to his regret that in the above case he had not been able to suppress his view of the principles involved out of personal friendship for Mr. Chamberlain and his family.

"My regard and respect for Mr. Austen Chamberlain is as great as for his father. He showed by his action when he resigned the office of Secretary of State for India that he is prepared to maintain the highest standard of political honour, and so did a great public service."

Holding these views on the morality of public men, the attitude of the *Spectator* in 1912, when the burning question of an agreement with the Marconi Company came to the fore, may be imagined. A leader in October 1912 pointed out the parallel between the situation which had arisen with regard to the Marconi agreement and the Kynoch

contracts of 1912. Into the accusations and counter-accusations of the buying and selling of the shares by Ministers of the Crown it is unnecessary to enter now. A Parliamentary Committee was appointed in the autumn of 1912 to inquire into the Marconi contract, and more than one Cabinet Minister appeared before it. In the spring St. Loe reduced the whole matter to a dramatic parable called "Cæsar's Wife," which was published in the *Spectator* of May 3rd, 1913. In this Cæsar warns Calpurnia, at breakfast, of the unpleasant rumours flying about the city about her in connection with a man named *Marc* :

"I am sure it began with *Marc*—but really and truly, I cannot remember the rest of it. Yes, I am certain it was *Marc* something or other. You're generally so good about names, surely you remember ? "

Calpurnia defends herself hotly, and Cæsar reminds her that she had herself written a sonnet on the subject, whereupon she flounces out of the room, and the stage direction follows :

" [*Enter the Private Secretary* SPECTATUS.

Spectatus : Ave Cæsar. It is half-past ten. I suppose you have not forgotten that the Thracian envoys have been here waiting for over half-an-hour ?

Cæsar : I am very sorry indeed. I will come directly. But look here, do you remember when I first married, about ten years ago, that Calpurnia wrote a sonnet about the necessity of Cæsar's wife being above suspicion ?

Spec. : Perfectly, Cæsar.

Cæsar : Well, would you look it up for me and give it to Calpurnia. I think she would like to see it.

Spect. : Certainly, Cæsar. I will see that her ladyship's woman brings it up on Saturday morning with her early tea.

Cæsar : Thank you, Spectatus. That will be very kind."

The majority report of the Marconi Committee was made in June, and a motion by Mr., afterwards Viscount Cave, "That this House regrets the transactions of certain of his Majesty's Ministers in the shares of the Marconi Company of America, and the want of frankness displayed by Ministers in their communications on the subject to the House," was lost. A whitewashing amendment was passed, and it might be thought that the matter was ended. Rumours as to Marconi shares and their holders were, however, current all through the War, and finally terminated in the Marconi libel case brought by Mr. Godfrey Isaacs against Sir Charles Hobhouse, in which the jury found a verdict for the defendant.

The *Spectator* wrote on August 3rd, 1918 :

"The whole Marconi business is a subject for the keenest regret, and above all because even now we cannot finally clear it up by a full, frank and free admission of our follies and worse. *It has been a sordid business from beginning to end.*"

Another question as to the "Delicacy and Discretion" of public men, to quote the title of a leader of December 14th, 1912, arose almost simultaneously with the Marconi inquiry. This concerned the transactions in silver carried out by the Government with the firm of Messrs. Samuel Montagu & Co. At that time Mr. Edwin Montagu was Under-Secretary for India, and an application was made by a private member in February for "the appointment

of a Select Committee to inquire into the administration of Indian finance, especially in relation to the recent silver purchases and distribution of cash balances." The *Spectator* once more repeated the comment :

"Whenever money considerations are involved in public transactions, Ministers must show the maximum of delicacy and discretion." (*Spectator*, February 15th, 1913.)

Mr. Edwin Montagu became Secretary of State for India on the retirement of Mr. Austen Chamberlain in July 1917. He visited India in December of the same year, and in the July of 1918 was published the Chelmsford-Montagu Report on the question of Indian Reform.

Two pamphlets issued by the Indo-British Association were reviewed at length in the October of 1918, and when the Indian Reform Bill was presented to the House of Commons in June 1919, the *Spectator* took a definite stand against the proposal known as the Dyarchy. In the winter of the same year a series of articles was published, entitled "National Mismanagement," and in No. 4 of these not only was the new Indian Constitution severely criticised, but the position of Mr. Montagu in the matter of public delicacy was set forth at length. The result of this article was a letter from Mr. Montagu, received on December 11th, 1919, stating that he had read with great interest the article in the *Spectator* and would be glad if St. Loe would give him the opportunity of a talk. We were at that moment living within a few doors of Mr. Montagu in Queen Anne's Gate, and the following Sunday, December 14th, was settled for the interview. A memorandum records the conversation, which opened with St. Loe informing

Mr. Montagu that his consent to the interview was dependent on its not being regarded as confidential. The chief point which Mr. Montagu made with regard to the so-called Silver Scandals was that when he

“ became Secretary of State he wrote a minute directing the cutting off of all direct communications between the India Office and Messrs. S. Montagu & Co. This was done, and the firm of S. Montagu and Co., which had hitherto been on the list of firms tendering for the weekly sale of the India Office drafts, were struck out of the list. They had, however, only been on that list as agents for a Dutch Company. Mr. Montagu also wrote a minute ordering the cutting off of indirect communication between the India Office and his brother's firm. The indirect relations, I understood from Mr. Montagu, arose from the firm occasionally renewing bonds of Indian railways under the control of the Indian Government. The Secretary of State's Council, however, objected to refusing Messrs. S. Montagu's tenders, as it would reduce the number of firms competing for the renewal of bonds, and so the *status quo* was continued.

“ The only newspapers which had attacked him on the point of honour were the *Morning Post* and the *Spectator*. Mr. Montagu had no desire to explain himself to the *Morning Post* and took no account of their criticism. The criticism of the *Spectator* was quite different.

“ Mr. Montagu said that he did not see how he could continue to hold *any* Cabinet Office at all, if the *Spectator* standard were to be applied, so long as he had brothers in the City. I said, ‘ No, not *all* offices ; for example, the Army, Navy, etc.’ He said he had relations in the Army and Navy. I explained that that was totally different and

that my objections were not concerned with nepotism and the point dropped.

“ I explained my position in regard to the preservation of a high standard in the matter of public offices chronologically. (That is, the question of Mr. Chamberlain, and the question of Marconi.)

“ The *Spectator* criticism of Mr. Montagu was on similar lines to those used in the two other cases just mentioned. From these three instances it can be seen that the *Spectator* was not singling out Mr. Montagu for any unfair or personal censure, but, rightly or wrongly, was maintaining the position it had always taken up in regard to the maintenance of the very highest possible standard in our political and public life, inconvenient though the preservation of that standard might be to individuals in particular cases.

“ Mr. Montagu did not use a word of explanation or argument as to these matters just stated, but left the statement of my position without comment of any kind.

“ Mr. Montagu proceeded to say that if the criticism of the *Spectator* in regard to his personal honour continued and received support from any considerable section of the public, it would be necessary for him to consider whether these reflections on his honour would not make it necessary for him to leave office altogether. He put this in such a way as to give the impression that this was the course he would probably pursue.”

The memorandum further states that St. Loe then said that he wondered that Mr. Montagu did not make public the minutes described by him as to cutting off direct and indirect communication, and offered to give them the fullest publicity in the *Spectator*, as would obviously only be just and right. Mr. Montagu

“seemed quite pleased with the idea and, to my surprise, appeared to regard it as an original and helpful suggestion, and said he would ask the opinion of his Council, i.e., Council of Secretary of State for India, on this matter. (Note : Mr. Montagu has not to my knowledge published the Memoranda here referred to.—J. St. L. S.)

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“The interview closed by my once more assuring Mr. Montagu that I should be quite willing to publish any statement he might care to make.—J. St. L. S.”

CHAPTER VIII

LAST YEARS

It is proverbially easier for those who have lived more than half a century to remember the events of their earlier life than those of the later. It is therefore only to be expected that I should feel an enormous difficulty in getting into focus the rush of happenings, public and private, in the years since the War.

A new departure for St. Loe was the writing of books. During his illness he had perforce freed himself largely from editorial duties at the *Spectator*, though he still wrote as much as ever, and he thought that he was going to enjoy a good deal of leisure. The leisure never occurred, however, and I question whether he would have enjoyed it. Four large volumes stand to his credit between the years 1922 and 1926. He himself in a lecture provided so striking an account of how the first volume, *The Adventure of Living*, came to be written that I cannot do better than quote his words. The lecture was given to the City of London Young Men's Christian Association on November 23rd, 1922, and opened with these words :

“ A friend of mine ” [it was Mr. Curtis Brown, the well-known literary agent] “ called on me and said, ‘ Will you write your autobiography ? ’ I was resentful and said, ‘ Do you take me for a Cabinet Minister or his wife ? ’ ‘ No,’ he replied, ‘ the offer is quite serious.’ He mentioned

such an interesting figure that I was obliged to be interested in the offer. To tell you the truth, I was in despair. I had never written a book, though there was no limit to the amount I had written as a journalist. I was frightened. But I sat down the next morning and made a start. I went right at it. I had not been writing for more than three days when the great martyrdom became a great pleasure.

“There was no job I liked so much nor found so interesting. I suppose that arose from finding that I remembered so much more of my life than I had thought possible. I found my memory very accurate.”

St. Loe went on to speak of a whole series of standpoints which he had decided against adopting. In the first place he rejected “the luncheon and dinner autobiography, written by the person who says ‘I dined with So-and-so, and lunched with So-and-so.’” He then rejected the “conscientious biography” and the “confessional autobiography,” and found that

“the only one left was what I call the subjective autobiography, which deals with the man himself and not his externals. It is the most interesting, this biography of a man’s origin and of the influences which have gone to make him what he is ; good or bad, it does not matter.”

Further, true journalist as he was, he said he felt :

“one had to write a book that people would want to read. It must, therefore, be readable. My life, I thought, has not been an exciting one, but that does not matter. After all, the mere act of living is a great adventure, whether you live quietly or not.”

With regard to style, he continued :

“ I managed to tap my sub-consciousness, the note-book which receives every impression of life. . . . Partly, I think, because of the great pleasure I had in writing, I was able to reach this sub-conscious self. I wrote quickly, or, at least, the time passed quickly.”

With regard to the selection of material, he frankly acknowledged that he “ refused to be conscientious.”

“ I was going to be governed by the rule which journalists have of ‘ good copy.’ If I had good copy, if it interested me, I knew I would infect my readers with that interest. You must please yourself if you want to please other people.”

Curiously enough, he told his audience that his book affected his point of view and led him into

“ those interesting speculations about the past, present and future, which have circulated round Einstein’s theory of relativity. In writing that autobiography I could not keep it out. I became very much impressed with the Einstein view of the non-existence of time, or time being a relative quality and that you could not divide the Universe into past and future. The future is only the past come back to you, and the past the only thing you could be sure of.”

The end which all autobiographies, and biographies, too, for that matter, have in view is the emergence of the real man. On the question of whether or not a biography is successful in this point rests its success or failure,

The next book, *The River of Life*, had a less happy beginning, being the result of what threatened to be a great tragedy. In the autumn of 1922, just after *The Adventure of Living* appeared, we went with John, who was at that time at Oxford, for a motor tour in France. As St. Loe tells in the long foreword which forms a dedication to "Evelyn John St. Loe Strachey, the Begetter of this Diary":

"in the Inn at Rouen on the evening of the first day of our motor tour through France you urged me to write a Diary. I should capture, you said, my flying fancies, put a pin through them, and fasten them on to my page."

We had hardly got to Avignon when a sudden attack of appendicitis put us for the second time in our lives in imminent danger of the loss of a son. Followed

"three or four days of sudden and swift decisions, fierce action and long hours of suspense, and then the clouds broke, and 'votre malade' became 'our convalescent.'"

"You lived. And we—your mother, your sister and I—were stirred by the old primal instinct to bring you our offerings. As I sat in the nuns' garden at the *Clinique* of the Sisters of St. Francis waiting to come on duty, I thought it would please you to bring, instead of flowers and books and *gâteaux à la crème*, some specimen pages of the Diary once in debate—now 'a command performance.'"

The public never liked this book so well as *The Adventure of Living*; but those who knew St. Loe found in it more of his mind and soul than in any other of his works. He really

wrote it quite faithfully as a diary—that is, he wrote of the things that at the moment he was doing and thinking. For instance, the section, “*Italian Petimus*—We’re off to Italy,” forms a delightful diary of a tour we took through his beloved North Italy in the year 1923. He dwelt on the pleasures and humours of life in Italy, the magnanimity of the architecture of her small towns, and finally, when we left Genoa, wrote :

“ I am not superstitious, or weighed down by any premonition, but I am caught by the perfectly rational inquiry, ‘ I wonder whether I shall ever see Italy again ? ’ ”

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His farewell was not final. In the following spring we went in search of warmth and health, neither of which we found, to Southern Italy, staying at a charming hotel at Sorrento. It was the time of the Italian elections, and St. Loe, to whom the rumour of a political crisis was as exciting as the sound of a horn to hounds, took every opportunity of talking to intelligent shopkeepers, etc., of the election and its probable results. “ The urns have spoken,” wrote Mussolini on a broadsheet which announced the victory of the Government ; and great was St. Loe’s delight when, on stopping in Rome on the way home, he found that Sir Ronald Graham had most kindly, before his arrival, arranged for him to have an interview with the Italian Prime Minister. It was not our only view of him. On the day of our arrival, walking in the Borghese Gardens, we caught sight of a motor-car being driven by a most remarkable looking man in the direction of the little refreshment house on the top of the hill. “ I believe that is Mussolini,” said I, and we hurried to the spot, which we

reached in time to see the great man, taking very little notice of the applause of the crowd gathered round him, get out of his car, drink a glass of water, pay for it, and drive off again.

The account of St. Loe's much nearer view is contained in the following notes, which he wrote in the train coming home. They are published with the consent of the Italian Government, which Sir Ronald Graham was kind enough to obtain.

“ MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH H.E. THE
ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER

“ On Thursday, 24th April, 1924, I was received by Signor Mussolini at the Chigi Palace and had with him an instructive and illuminating conversation. It had, however, some strange features, owing to the fact that he does not speak English and only understands it imperfectly, and that, though I find no difficulty in understanding French, I cannot express myself therein when complicated political questions are involved.

“ But though we were obliged to have recourse to the aid of an interpreter—an office admirably performed by the President's *Chef de Cabinet*, the Marchese Paolucci—I was by no means disappointed. I had an opportunity to study Signor Mussolini's personality, which I should have missed in the rapidity of ordinary conversation.

“ It is said that in a speech there are three things that matter : ‘ What is said ; how it is said ; and who says it ’ ; and the same holds good of a set conversation. It is also said that these three things are placed in inverse order to their importance. A talk with Mussolini offers no exception, and I shall therefore first put on record the impression made by him on my mind.

“As he sat behind his desk, making no attempt at a conventional welcome to a foreigner beyond a nod, I could not help noting that I had before me a very busy and very tired man—it was half-past four and he begins work at nine or earlier, I believe—who had committed himself to an appointment which he now felt he had no time for. He was perfectly polite, but seemed embarrassed by circumstance and not able or willing to pretend to being less busy than he was. Imagine Vulcan interrupted at his forge. But Mussolini is the Vulcan who is hammering out the new Italy on his anvil day by day, and all day. You can feel the heat of the furnace and the strain on his body, in the set of the muscles of his face, in his heavy shoulders, and in his regard.

“‘*Tantae molis erat, Romanam condere gentem.*’

(So vast a burden and so hard a pace

Is his, who seeks to mould a Sovereign Race.)

“This expression, his manner, his way of talking, his whole aspect is that of the man of action, though not by any means of the man without ideas or ideals. His aspirations, you feel, are vast, passionate, and difficult of communication to others except in simple outline. For himself, however, they are intense. Voltaire says in his play of *Merope* that the King man, the ruler, can have no ‘allies,’ no sharers, no co-operators. He must act alone. That truthful exaggeration seemed to me written all over Mussolini. You can far more easily imagine him giving an order than setting forth his object, or explaining why the order was given.

“I did not conceive him as irresponsible, or wilful, or as an egotistical man—I mean the man in whom

self-approval swamps reason and who cannot believe it possible that he should ever be mistaken. I can imagine Mussolini in action anxious in a high degree as to his choice between the two roads—left or right.

“He is clearly a man irritated by opposition, stupidity and timidity, but also a man who can, when necessary, let reason enforce on him a patience which is not naturally his. And on the top of all this there is, I am sure, a mood of real shyness which, though it can be, and is, overcome, is always in the background. That is why he is so much less reticent, so much more easy to reach, so much more comprehensive and comprehending, as I found, at the end of an interview than at the beginning. He has also, I am sure, that occasional angry ‘hastiness’ of the young man—he is only a very little over forty—which, though it is often necessary for achievement, can also mislead severely. He had formed a view of what I was and what I wanted from him, and when he found his lightning diagnosis did not fit in with the actualities, he was momentarily and in a sense unconsciously annoyed and embarrassed. When, however, he had ‘got me,’ as an American would say, all was well.

“His way of talking was to me very attractive and very impressive. It was not volcanic, or violent, or loud, or hortative, but what can best be expressed by ‘smouldering.’ His way of talking reminds one of a very strong fire that has been elaborately and determinedly damped down. It is ready to flame, but is not in flame. You feel that it would not need much use of the bellows either from without or within to get Mussolini white hot. Meantime he smoulders in a low, slow voice, with only an occasional sparkle if he approves, or a darkening of the fuel in his brow and eyes if he is not in agreement.

“ And now for what was said rather than how it was said and who said it.

“ The Prime Minister began by saying that he understood that I wanted to ask him some questions and that the best plan would be for me to write them down, and that if I would come back next day he would give me the answers. I explained that I did not want to worry him with a formal interrogatory and had really come in order to have the honour of seeing him and expressing to him my great admiration for what he was doing for Italy, and also to express my strong love of Italy and my hope that our two countries should work together whole-heartedly in the sphere of international politics, and this as much in our best interests as in those of Italy, for I made no pretense to an altruistic attitude ! Besides I could not, unfortunately, come back next day as I was starting for England that night.

“ He looked, not angry, nor yet annoyed, that I did not do what he had suggested, but seemed (to continue my Vulcan metaphor) as if he had made a miss blow on his anvil and was feeling as one feels when one says ‘ Oh, damn ! ’ He looked sullen, and yet without being rude.

“ I felt we were getting to an *impasse* and that I must do something, and so, greatly daring, I began to describe how I thought Britain and Italy should act in unison—and especially in regard to the Mediterranean. Britain hitherto had not had a clear Mediterranean policy, for which failure I blamed my own nation. Why should not Britain and Italy in company with Spain adopt a joint Mediterranean policy ? Would not it be possible to hold a Conference and stabilise the political situation in the Mediterranean in regard to naval affairs on the analogy of the Washington Conference ? Italy, I went on to say,

was the essential Mediterranean Power, and no other nation could dispute her claim to be consulted and considered in all that concerned the Mediterranean. Italy had the longest Mediterranean coastline of any European Power. Further, the Mediterranean is her sole water-gate. France has plenty of ports of importance on the Atlantic and the Channel. Spain, again, has a huge Atlantic seaboard. Italy's only sea is the Mediterranean.

"The Prime Minister naturally liked this view and he was evidently moved by my frankly admitting my great regret that we had not originally dealt with the Jubaland problem 'on its own' and not mixed it up with the Dodecanese, which I ventured to think was a matter of international concern and should not be treated as on the same plane as Jubaland. Mussolini showed strong appreciation of my declaration of regret that Italy was not made a party to the Tangier settlement. Anything which affected the entrance to the Mediterranean must, I urged, deeply concern her.

"By this time I think Mussolini had come to see that I was not trying to get a newspaper 'scoop.' Nevertheless, he still felt, I think, somewhat bewildered. He had thought I was out for 'copy' and he meant to suggest that English people were too much inclined to think that Italy had not even yet quite reached man's estate and must not be encouraged to get out of her depth, and so on and so on. Such an attitude of semi-patronising sympathy or even generosity, he was ready to tell me, was not the way to Italy's esteem and co-operation; and then here was I turning out a great deal '*plus royaliste que le Roi*'! A situation so topsyturvy from his point of view perturbed him, I think, or, at any rate, made him suspicious, not of me—there was no indication of that—but of the situation generally. He

is not a talking man or a dialectician, and he was determined not to be surprised into saying anything without due consideration. So he let the conversation drift into another direction—that of reparations. Here he wanted to know whether I thought that the British people were willing to let Reparations and the Inter-Allied debt be treated together. Italy had accepted the Reports of the Experts just as we had. Italy had also always expressed her intention to pay her debts ; but would it not be rather strange if we were to let the Germans, our former enemies, off their Reparation debt to us while we exacted our debt from Italy ?

“ I naturally was not in a position to discuss so technical a matter, but when he again returned to the subject as if he had a sense of grievance here, I told him that I had always advocated a Clearing House transaction under which all payments of all kinds due would be cleared against each other. I did not add, though I felt tempted to do so, that in my belief Reparations and similar payment such as War Debts could only be paid by goods, and goods which would not, like goods sent in the ordinary way of trade, demand a *quid pro quo* in other goods. Reparations, and indeed all non-commercial payments or tributes, must relieve the people of the nation receiving them from the obligation of Labour. But that is the last thing wanted by a nation with a million unemployed. We do not want to learn by a practical trial what Bismarck discovered in 1872—namely, that the nation which suffers from the payment of Reparations is the receiver, not the payer. Such payments take work away from the workers.

“ I felt, however, that this would be getting too far away from my object—the desire to suggest a closer unity of purpose with Italy.

" I left the subject feeling, however, that Mussolini does not himself feel that he has found bottom on the double problems of Reparations and Debts. Surely it is for us to give a lead here ?

" Our talk ended by my expressing what I admit is more in the nature of prophecy than practical politics, but which in my case is none the less sincere and none the less a reality. I told Mussolini that I believed, as I was sure he did, that Italy is destined for the third time to be the leading State of Europe. She held that position in Roman Days. She held it again in the Middle Ages. She was now about to enter upon her third, and possibly her greatest period. In the course of the next fifty or a hundred years she might be the European Power of enlightenment in politics, in commerce, in the arts, and in literature.

" I shall not pretend that he was not touched by hearing what is well known to be his own belief expressed by an Englishman, though from an angle so different from his own. Mussolini in taking leave of me shook hands twice very warmly and I think with sincerity. There was, however, no pose, no attempt to act a part.

" He is in the widest sense of the word a great man and I can well believe with those who know him best and most intimately that he has intellect as well as character. His is the comprehensive, the far-seeing, deep-seeing mind. He reminded me, though at first the analogy may seem far-fetched, of the late Duke of Devonshire in his slowness, reticence, and yet high intellectual vigour. To have seen the two men together would have been an extraordinary spectacle.

" That Mussolini has plenty of defects I have no doubt. He is inclined, I expect, to think that opposition to the carrying out of his aspirations is a crime and deserves to be

punished as are other crimes. He is trying to make his country great, worthy, and happy, and those who try to prevent his doing so must expect rough treatment. They have no right to block his path.

"That is a dangerous view? No doubt it is, and if he cannot learn a little of the Whig spirit it may turn his noble Chronicle Play into a tragedy.

"Well, whatever the event, I, who am not apt to feel personal fascinations, must confess to being not a little affected by the spell of Mussolini. 'He looked like a great man, and not like a bad man.' That I believe to be a true verdict. He is not a trickster, not a gambler, and not a man to whom the desire to serve his country means in fact the desire to be at the top of the tree and to enjoy the sweets of power and sovereignty !

"J. ST. LOE STRACHEY.

"25th April, 1924."

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Oddly enough, after *The River of Life* the next book which St. Loe wrote was in the nature of a *scherzo*. He had long wished to write the captions for a film, and prepared a complete scenario, but he was advised that unless he published his ideas (it was a historical film dealing with London and Paris in 1848), he could not copyright them. He, therefore, put them together in the form of a novel, which he entitled *The Madonna of the Barricades*. It is a thousand pities that no film was ever constructed from its pages. The events of the Paris revolutions of 1848 were full of drama, and the charming love story which runs through the pages of the book would have supplied an excellent sentimental interest.

The final book was *American Soundings*, but this was not published till 1926, and many matters connected

with America must be noted before that. In 1923 St. Loe was much interested in the erection in Westminster Abbey of a tablet to the memory of Walter Hines Page, that great American Ambassador, whose sympathetic attitude towards this country during the crucial years of the War has been revealed to the world in his *Life and Letters*. The Dedicatory Service on July 3rd will live long in my memory as the most beautiful and most dignified ceremony it is possible to imagine. The tablet bears this simple inscription :

“ To the Glory of God and in Memory of Walter Hines Page, 1855-1918. Ambassador of the United States to the Court of St. James's, 1913-1918. The friend of Britain in her sorest need.”

It is placed below the tablet to Mr. Lowell on the right of the steps leading up to the Chapter House. At the service Lord Grey stood on the top step and spoke to the little assemblage, which included, besides Mrs. Page and several members of her family, the Prime Minister and the most distinguished statesmen in the nation. His speech, as the note in the *Spectator* said, was fully worthy of the occasion. At its conclusion the clergy and choir formed a procession and passed from the Chapter House through the Cloisters to the Abbey. When the last of the choir-boys left there was a little pause, and then Mr. Baldwin stepped forward quite simply, offered his arm to Mrs. Page, and the company followed the chanting choir. When we had all reached the Choir of the Abbey, the service proceeded, and nothing was ever more impressive than to hear the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* echoing through the arches of Westminster Abbey, emphasising with its

harmony the friendship between the two great English-speaking nations.

Later on, the Page Memorial Committee, of which St. Loe became Chairman, instituted a series of lectures to be called the "Page Memorial Lectures," the first of which was given by Sir Auckland Geddes on the afternoon of Armistice Day, November 11th, 1924. Lord Balfour took the Chair, and the American Ambassador and the Prime Minister supported him. The outcome of the 1924 Election, with its overwhelming Conservative majority, will be well remembered ; but few people, I suppose, now call to mind the delightful parenthesis in Mr. Baldwin's speech when he began a sentence, "Few people are ever given a second chance (*except me*, of course !)." With the change of American Administration the American Ambassador, Mr. Davis, who had succeeded Mr. Page, had been succeeded by Mr. George Harvey, one of the few instances, as the *Spectator* pointed out, in which a journalist had been sent to represent his country. St. Loe saw a good deal of Mr. Harvey till his retirement in the autumn of 1923, and they remained correspondents till our visit to America in the autumn of 1925.

On one memorable occasion in the summer of 1922 we had the honour of being included in a dinner-party which the Ambassador and Mrs. Harvey gave, at which, I was going to write, Chief Justice Taft was the guest of honour. As, however, Their Majesties the King and Queen were present, this might be thought an invidious statement, as I suppose that even reigning monarchs are guests in the house of an Ambassador. I cannot do better, I feel, than quote the discriminating and courteous sentiment which I was told might be attributed to the King when Buckingham Palace was consulted by the agitated Staff of the

Embassy on the subject of Mr. Taft's costume. The Staff was informed that, as Mr. Taft had been the Chief Executive Officer of his own country, he would, of course, wear what he pleased. The situation could not be more truthfully or tactfully summed up. St. Loe was delighted to receive on the very morning of the dinner a letter from Mr. Taft stating that he was not only a subscriber to the *Spectator*, but a constant reader, and praising the paper for the "calm, judicial and satisfactory consideration" which it gave to the "important events of Great Britain and the World" and for giving "such a catholic view of the happenings in America."

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After working for two or three years on the *Spectator*, our son John had finally thrown in his lot with the Labour Party. His Father entirely sympathised with his determination to give effect to his convictions, and—always a Liberal at heart—there is no doubt that in the last years of his life St. Loe's political attitude veered decidedly to the left.

For some months St. Loe had been feeling the burden of editorship too much for him, and before we left for America he handed over the control of the *Spectator* to its present Editor, Mr. Evelyn Wrench. At the same time he felt that the big house at Newlands was too expensive, and just before we sailed we sold it to a hotel company, keeping on most of the land and getting our son-in-law, Clough Williams-Ellis, to make plans for a little house which we hoped would soon be ready for our summer home. Holding, as I always have, that the two most dangerous things a man over sixty can do are to retire from his work and to move his house, these approaching changes filled me with

forebodings. But St. Loe was delighted. He did not want to edit, but he did want to write. He did not want to live in a big house, but he did want a little house at Newlands in the summer.

When we were contemplating our second visit to America in the autumn of 1925, Mr. Harvey wrote to him on September 15th to tell him that he had informed President Coolidge of our approaching visit. With regard to the subject of the Debt, Mr. Harvey went on :

“ Well, M. Caillaux takes ship with his motley crew to-morrow to present to us innocents an example of wizardry designed to blind our eyes and bewilder our minds. He may be surprised to discover that our folks are more amused by, than interested in, the exhibition. But when, if ever, he gets down to business, he will quickly discern that we are fully aware that France recognises no obligation, legal or moral, and that his real purpose is nothing else than to pay the smallest conceivable premium to our people to clear the way for huge loans from our bankers.—To which : Fudge ! ”

We sailed on our first visit to Canada and our second to America at the end of September 1925, and the excitement and pleasure of our visit to the other side of the Atlantic made me forget that we were turning down the last leaves of the two chief chapters of our lives. I have left myself scant room to talk of those delightful weeks. The new friends we made in Canada were as stimulating as the old friends we met again in America. And then there was the great trek from one country to the other, when, at the instigation of our great friend, formerly St. Loe's secretary, Joseph Brewer, his father and mother, Mr. and Mrs.

Brewer of Grand Rapids, brought their splendid car to Hamilton, Ontario, and drove us down the Susquehanna Trail, in and out of the autumn woods, eight hundred miles to Philadelphia. It is impossible to estimate how much we had loved Canada. To meet our own people under our own flag, to see their new Universities, McGill at Montreal, and Toronto, with its beautiful campus and Hart House as its focus, was a wonderful delight. Personally, I was greatly interested in Toronto in visiting the first court I had ever seen with a woman judge—the Court presided over by Dr. Margaret Paterson. Canada was in the throes of a General Election, so that it was not possible to see as many of her statesmen as we wished, but those we did see were delightful, especially one of the judges at Ottawa, who had done great service in London as a member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Ottawa remains in my mind as a city of waters. Every night we climbed to the highest point of the hill on which stand her Parliament buildings to watch the sunset over the St. Lawrence. Truly a noble site for the capital of a new nation.

I shall never forget the journey down the Susquehanna Trail, the night we passed in Williamsport, where the head waiter informed us that he had been “a lacquey at the Court of the King of Denmark” and produced a magnificent watch which had been presented to him by the Danish Royal Family—the day we spent at Gettysburg trying to estimate the details of that monumental fight—and finally our welcome at Swarthmore College, where St. Loe was to give the Founder’s Day Address, by our great friends, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Aydelotte. Later we had some days at Mr. Ronald Tree’s house in the Blue Mountains of Virginia, where his aunt, Mrs. Dana Gibson, took us to

the old-world houses of the Virginian gentlemen, still keeping, in spite of the silence and desertion of their slave quarters, much of the grand air which they had acquired before the Civil War. I was irresistibly reminded of the Palace of the Sleeping Beauty. Great excitement was caused while we were in Virginia by the reception of a telegram from the White House bidding us dine with the President and Mrs. Coolidge on a certain night. "There is a man here whom the President wants to have dine with him," said the postmaster, and the rumour went round, to the edification of the neighbourhood. Needless to say, we had a most interesting evening. We found the President and Mrs. Coolidge alone, and while St. Loe and the President after dinner retired to talk politics I had a delightful *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Coolidge, who allowed me to ask her all those questions as to the amusing details of the life of royalty about which one must generally be discreetly silent.

And finally New York and Boston—the latter full of the charm of great learning simply borne, with the marvellous River Charles running through the heart of the city. New York, however, had been my first love, and to me, except my native London, it is the most delightful city in the world. There we spent unforgettable days and nights, first in Joseph Brewer's flat, and later marvellously entertained by our old friends, the Nicholas Murray Butlers, on the Morningside Heights overlooking the city. Mrs. Douglas Robinson and the Roosevelt Memorial claimed us for a morning, and at endless dinners, lunches and parties, among which those given by Mrs. Cadwalader Jones were as usual most interesting, we met all our old friends and made new ones. St. Loe, of course, saw practically every man worth seeing in New York. He has

embedded his impressions in his fourth book, *American Soundings*, which, indeed, gives the impression of our journey far better than these brief notes. I cannot help dwelling on those golden weeks, for they were the last of our unclouded happiness. We came back to say good-bye to the old house at Newlands and, in the spring, to struggle through the General Strike.

CHAPTER IX

THE END OF THE STORY

“ I, who have always been an explorer at heart, am getting near the greatest exploration of all. There are only two or three more bends of the stream, and I shall shoot out into that new lake or new reach, whichever it may be. I may have a pleasant thrill of dread of what is there, but not of fear. The tremendous nature of that splendid unknown may send a shiver through my limbs, but it is stimulating, not paralysing.”—J. St. L. S., in *The Adventure of Living*.

No one living can have forgotten the dark opening of the month of May, 1926. On Saturday, May 1st, negotiations between the General Council of the Trades Union Congress and the Government were in progress, and continued all through the Sunday. On the Sunday afternoon things looked a little better ; but St. Loe ordered the papers to be brought up to him the moment they came in the morning. Like a bombshell came the news on Monday, the 3rd, that negotiations had been broken off at midnight and that the General Strike was to take place. The reason of the breach is still a matter of controversy. The facts are not in dispute—only the, much more important, motives behind the facts.

Followed ten days of chaos. It was hardly half-past nine on that first Monday when Mr. Wrench rang St. Loe up from the *Spectator* office to talk about his article for the following Saturday, for, with his usual resource and marvellous power of organisation, it was but a very few hours before Mr. Wrench had settled the form which the issue of the *Spectator* was to take on May 8th. On that day there

duly appeared a unique copy of the paper in typescript produced by the Gestetner Duplicating Machine. This contained a miniature of the usual *Spectator* with very full political notes, one leader by St. Loe, and a picturesque account, under the heading "These Troublous Days," of what London looked like in the first week of the Strike. There were, of course, no letters or literary pages. The account of the negotiations was so impartial that it gave considerable offence to some of the readers of the *Spectator*, though others hailed it as the only Unionist paper which held the balance with perfect fairness on the subject of the Strike. St. Loe's leader, which was called "Good Intent in Negotiation," contained no emotional appeal to the nation, but a reasoned analysis of events before the breakdown. "The powers of a Government," he wrote, "are so tremendous and its responsibilities so great that it cannot afford to think of its feelings or its rights except on the plane where rights and duties become one." Following on this, the article set forth the possible opportunity for agreed action in the manifesto of the T.U.C. as to the classification of the collieries.

Meanwhile our house became like nothing so much as a telephone exchange. Every sort of person rang St. Loe up, and he held small committees in the dining-room, while I was holding committees in the drawing-room. I had joined a band of people headed by Lady Clementine Waring, and afterwards presided over by Sir John Barran, for providing sleeping accommodation for the girl workers in London, especially those in the food shops, and we were meeting upstairs while St. Loe was busy downstairs. The situation became impossible, and the Hostel Committee moved off into an empty house and a disengaged telephone.

Of all the curious scenes which went on at 76, Chester Square, the one that remains most clearly in my head is the dinner on Saturday, May 8th, to which we had invited two very old friends, the distinguished Americans, Mr. and Mrs. Max Farrand. They were obliged to come on foot, for the taxis had ceased to ply on Wednesday. It was the evening when Mr. Baldwin broadcasted a message to the nation. We had only a small crystal set, and I shall never forget our all four sitting in our little dining-room, each with one earpiece of a headphone, to hear the Prime Minister of England speak to the country.

St. Loe's activities would have been too much even for a much younger man. Besides his efforts in the *Spectator*, it will be readily believed that his mind worked feverishly as to possible bases for the re-opening of negotiations. He held that the first thing which had to be cleared up was the question of the declaration of the Trades Union Congress, which the Government believed had been that they would never allow the question of wages to be discussed. St. Loe's views, accepted by Mr. J. H. Thomas in an interview at the offices of the Trades Union Congress on Thursday, May 6th, was that the Congress would not pledge themselves in advance to accept lower wages, and therefore the essential words were "*in advance.*"

Having ascertained this, St. Loe put forward proposals for a Committee of National Reconciliation consisting of men who could not be accused of party motives, the prime object of which should be to promote the re-opening of the negotiations which had broken down on Sunday, May 2nd. Mr. Thomas agreed with these proposals, and St. Loe, after attending the Archbishop of Canterbury's peace meeting at the Queen's Hall on the same evening (Thursday, May 6th), saw Mr. Ramsay MacDonald the

next morning. To him he proposed a modification of the idea of the Committee of Reconciliation ; this was that a Buckingham Palace Conference should be called, to which the King might summon all the men available who had held the office of Prime Minister, in order that they might suggest some method for resuming negotiations. Mr. MacDonald, while in favour of the proposal, pointed out that nothing could, or ought to, be done without the advice of the actual Prime Minister, who was the King's constitutional adviser, and that the first thing must be to inform him of any proposal. The whole suggestion was, as St. Loe heard privately, considered ingenious and likely to be useful. It was communicated to Mr. Baldwin and mentioned in the highest quarters as a possibility. But the necessity for these negotiations ceased before they could go much further.

On Wednesday, May 12th, the B.B.C. broadcasted the information that the Strike was at an end. The actual statement issued by the Trades Union Congress, which was broadcasted at 4 p.m., is, perhaps, worth recalling :

“ In order to resume negotiations, the General Council of the Trades Union Congress has decided to terminate the General Strike to-day. Telegrams of instructions are being sent to the General Secretaries of all the Unions. Members before acting must await the definite instructions of their Executive Councils.”

But though, with many a jerk and creak, the industry of the country got into its stride again, the Coal Strike remained.

It will be remembered that the situation which produced the Strike was the arrival of the date at which the

Government's subsidy to the coal industry ceased. The subsidy had been granted in order to keep the mines open pending the report of the Coal Commission appointed by the Government in August 1925 to inquire into the facts as to the coal trade. The *Spectator* on March 13th, in a very brief summary, stated that the Report recommended the retention of the seven-hour day, a temporary reduction of the 1924 minimum percentage addition to standard wages, a re-organisation of the whole industry, coal rights and mineral rights to be acquired by the State and administered by a Coal Commission. It further advised the establishment of pit committees, of a system of family allowances, of profit-sharing schemes and of pithead baths, etc., with various minor reforms. As stated above, the miners declined to pledge themselves in advance to accept lower wages.

St. Loe made one of a deputation in June to the Ministry of Labour from a Committee, organised by Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck and others, urging the Government to carry out, not selected portions of the Report, but the whole Report. After coming back from the deputation, St. Loe wrote to Mr. A. J. Cook in great dissatisfaction at the attitude of the Government, especially in view of

“Mr. Herbert Smith's admirable and temperate speech at Mexborough—the speech in which he declared that ‘he was prepared to follow out the Report in its entirety, even though it might involve ultimately facing the reduction of wages.’”

Meanwhile St. Loe was asked to give active assistance to an even more important group. This was what was subsequently loosely known as the Churches' or Bishops'

Committee, organised by Mr. Kirk of the Industrial Christian Fellowship and a Free Church Minister, Mr. Henry Carter. Ten Church of England Bishops and the leaders of the Free Churches were concerned in this movement. In a memorandum written by St. Loe in the autumn he states that the Committee or Conference made no attempt to negotiate in the true sense of the word—that is, to arrive at terms or obtain terms. What it did do was to find out the attitude of the various parties as regards the Report. The Conference interviewed the owners, who rejected the Report as unworkable, and then proceeded to ascertain exactly what the miners meant when they expressed their willingness to accept the Report upon conditions.

“Having obtained the miners’ views, in precise terms, with the endorsement and acceptance of the leaders attached, they passed on this important information to the Government.” (*Spectator*, July 24th, 1926.)

The Bishops and others were received by the Prime Minister on Monday, July 19th, and issued a statement, published in *The Times* of July 24th, of their activities. They stated that, “regrettable as it seems to us, they [their proposals] did not secure the approval of the Prime Minister.”

During all this time St. Loe paid no regard whatever to his health and spared himself neither night nor day, so that when we left London for North Wales at the end of July, he was quite exhausted. Notwithstanding this, he told Mr. Kirk that he could certainly come up for the day without any harm if it was necessary, and Mr. Kirk telegraphed to him to do this in the first weeks of August. By August 18th Mr. Kirk informed St. Loe that he and Mr.

Carter had interviewed the Executive of the Miners' Federation, who had expressed their gratitude for the action taken by the Group. Mr. Herbert Smith, the Chairman, informed Mr. Kirk that he did not think that the Committee could render any further help at the moment, though it was possible that later on the Federation might find it needful to communicate with them again.

But St. Loe's public work was over. The strain had been too great, and from the end of August his strength failed. Dr. William Hunter and Dr. Desmond MacManus, who had looked after him with devoted care for the last ten years, worked unremittingly in the struggle for his life, but in vain. A last desperate effort was a journey to South Africa in January in search of sun. And there for a moment the old flame burnt up, and by the newest method of publicity St. Loe broadcasted his last message to the youngest of the nations of the Empire. Broken as he was in body, his spirit was as alert and vigorous as ever. When the microphone was fixed up in the manager's office of the Hotel Majestic, I asked leave to sit silently and hear the message. St. Loe did not recognise the warning signal when the power was turned on, and the whole of South Africa heard his eager voice questioning the expert, "May I begin now?" The text of the message has, unfortunately, not been preserved, but St. Loe spoke with his old wisdom and vigour of the courage and patience which were needed and would be forthcoming to weld together the new nation of South Africa.

And on a note of courage and patience the story of his life may fitly end.

INDEX

- Adventure of Living, The*
 How the book was written,
 358-360
- America, pre-war
 Landing, the interviewers in-
 terviewed, 139
 Roosevelt (*see under Roosevelt*)
 John Hay, letter from, 135
 John Hay on President Lin-
 coln's assassination, 145-146
- America in war time
 House, Colonel, 290, 349
 Foreign Office on Press com-
 ments, 326
 Henry Ford's Ship of Peace,
 333
 President Wilson on his hopes
 for the League of Nations,
 337 ; on the Fourteen Points,
 338 ; on the Allies' Reser-
 vations, 342
 Lodge, Senator, 348
 Battle Hymn of the Republic
 in Westminster Abbey, 371
- Baldwin, Stanley, 371-372, 380-
 381
- Balfour, A. J. (Lord Balfour),
 98, 125, 144, 152, 154, 156-
 157, 159-160, 163, 165, 171,
 190, 218, 235, 249, 308-309,
 372
 On news of Colenso, 105-106
 On House of Lords and Money
 Bills, 225-226
 On "Down Glasses" in War,
 308-309
- Bell, Gertrude, 204, 208, 222, 233
- Canada, first visit to, 374-375
- Cave, Viscount, on Marconi
 Committee, 353
- Cheap Cottages Exhibition, the,
 185-189
- Clemenceau, Georges, on his
 faith in League of Nations,
 347
- Cornhill Magazine*, the, 85-86, 88
- County Gentleman*, the, 183-189
- Cromer, Lord, 74-75, 77, 79-81,
 83-84, 100-101, 104, 112-
 114, 116, 128, 130, 138, 153-
 155, 166-167, 170, 175-177,
 194, 197, 207-208, 222, 228-
 229, 230, 231, 234, 238, 257,
 265, 303-304, 345
- Refuses Cabinet office, 161-
 162
- Policy, 207-208
- Visit to Federal trenches,
 1864, 326-327
- Death, 346
- Curzon, Lord, 73, 165-167,
 174-176, 231, 297, 323
- Letters on Curzon-Kitchener
 controversy, 168-173
- Daily Mail*, the, 71, 89, 90, 158
 On the *Spectator* and its Editor,
 91-93
- Daily News*, the, 347
- "Down Glasses" War Cam-
 paign, 296, 307-310
- Esher, Lord, 198-200, 253
- Free Trade, Mr. Henry Grenfell
 on, 59-60
- Mr. Chamberlain hints Protec-
 tion, 93
- The campaign and Election,
 1903 to 1906, 149-159
- Et passim*
- French, General Sir John (Lord
 Ypres), 201, 298

- Haldane, Lord, 161, 230, 234-235, 241, 243, 261, 330
 At War Office, 162, 194-195, 199, 201-202
 First mission to Germany, 240
 Defence of, by *Spectator*, 298-303
 Hankey, Donald, 304-305
 Harmsworth, Alfred (Lord Northcliffe), 114, 149, 151, 163, 185-186, 217, 311
 Founds *Daily Mail*, 71
 Negotiates for purchase of *Spectator*, 89-90
 The 1906 Election, 158
 Harvey, George, letter on M. Caillaux, 374
- Ireland, first visit to, 47
 In war time, 315-324
 St. Loe on Sinn Feiners' Black List, 322
Et passim
- Kingsley, Mary, 95-96, 100, 112
 On Long Ju Ju, 97-98
 On Hut Tax, 99
 Meets Cromer, 101
 In Boer War, 108-110
- Lee, Arthur (Lord Lee), 136, 160, 187, 231, 245, 251
 Lloyd George, David, 224-225, 239, 315, 318-319, 323-324, 338, 350
 On "pretentious, pompous and futile" Editor, *Spectator*, 229
 Letter on buying out liquor trade, 307
 War Prohibition, 311
- London in the nineties
 Parties, 39, 44-45, 57-58, 97-98
 Sunday calling, 46
 Clothes, 56-57
 Bicycling, 68-71
 Motors, 94-95
 The women hostesses' dinner, 98
- Manchester Guardian*, the, 178, 184, 236
- Marriage
 Courtship and wedding, 1-22
 Companionship, 37-38
 The three children, 30, 66, 130
 First home (Members' Mansions), 41
 The weekly books, 42-44
 St. Loe's love of country life, 49
- Montagu, Edwin, interview with, 354-357
Spectator on "Delicacy and Discretion" of public men, 353
- Morley, John, 161-162, 165, 175, 177, 207
 Letters on Curzon-Kitchener controversy, 171-174
- Mussolini, Benito, Interview with (1924), 363-370
- National Reserve, the, 240-244, 249-256, 300
- National Review*, the, 135, 292-293
- Navy and Army*, the, 249
- Newlands Corner, 313, 373, 377
 In 1890, 50-51
 First house (1891), 61-65
 The new Great Parlour, 128-129
- As Red Cross Hospital :
 "Mr. Boglo," 265-266
 The Zeppelin raid, 270-273
 Closing (1919), 281
- Nineteenth Century and After*, the, 65-66
- Pisé de terre*, 293-294
- Political honour
 Chamberlain, 350-351
 Marconi, parable of Cæsar's wife, 351-353
 Montagu, 353-357
- Punch*, 185
 Du Maurier's drawings, 56
 "St. Loe for Merry England!" 190-191
 "Up Glasses!" 310

- Queen Anne's Gate (No. 14)
 Walks in St. James's Park, 213
 The gold Venetian cabinet,
 214-215
 Parties : Imperial Press Con-
 ference, 217-218
 Parties to the Duma, 218-221
 Balls, 222, 233
 Roosevelt and Cromer dinner,
 228-229
 Queen Victoria, death of, 117
- Railway Strike, the great, 233,
 239
 Red Cross, 240, 243 ; and under
Surrey
 Rifle Clubs (*see under Surrey*)
 Roberts, Lord, 107, 114, 116,
 129-130, 171, 207, 242, 244-
 245, 250-251, 254-255
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 136, 139,
 147, 155, 207, 228, 245,
 329-330, 333
 Correspondence with, opens
 1900, 135
 Letter on Booker Washington
 incident, 137-138
 Visit to, at White House,
 141-145
 Letter on details of Treaty of
 Portsmouth, 179-182
 Meeting with Cromer, 228-
 229
 Letter of February 22nd, 1915,
 on Britain and the rights of
 neutrals, 327-328
 Sketch of League of Nations,
New York Times, October
 18th, 1914, 331-332
 Death, 346
- Scaman, Sir Owen, elegiacs on
 the Poet Laureateship, 85-
 86
 Sheriff (*see under Surrey*)
 Smith, Sir Cecil Harcourt, 45
- Spectator*, the, St. Loe becomes
 Editor and Proprietor of, 90
 Harmsworth negotiations for
 purchase, 89-90
 Watch-dog of nation, 235, 370
 The *Spectator* Spy, 110-111
 The typescript *Spectator*, 379
Et passim
Spectator Experimental Company,
 the, 195-202, 240
 Spender, J. A., letter on Ger-
 many, 237-238
 Squire, J. C., poem on unfor-
 tunate survival of Editor,
Spectator, 305-307
 Strike, the General, 378-381
Surrey
 Guildford in the eighties,
 27-29, 54-55
 Newlands Corner, 28-29, 49-
 51
 Village Rifle Clubs, 129-130,
 240-241
 Village Rifle Clubs and Field
 Days, 192-195
 Surrey Red Cross, 243-244,
 247-248, 251, 262-281
 The Surrey Guides, formation
 of, 249
 The Surrey Guides in war,
 285-289
 National Reserve in Surrey,
 240-244, 247-256
 The Surrey newspapers, 242,
 283
 The Sheriff's Camp, 250-255
 Badge for medically unfit,
 284-285
 The Guildford telephone ser-
 vice, 275
 Sutton Court, 18-20, 31-36, 95,
 128, 184
- Times*, *The*, 71, 102-103, 200,
 232, 311, 331, 383
Times, *The New York*, 331
- Wrench, Evelyn, 158, 373, 378

R. M. W. W.

